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ABTOT

WELCOME

BBC HISTORY MAGAZINE

On the throne for just nine days, **Lady Jane Grey** famously managed the shortest reign in English history before the accession of Mary Tudor in 1553. In a Tudor age often renowned for its brutality, it might seem a foregone conclusion that Jane would lose her life as well as her crown. Yet, as Nicola Tallis reveals in this month's cover feature, Mary was far from keen to execute her young cousin. In the end, it was the machinations of others, including members of Jane's own family, that finally secured her downfall. Turn to page 50 for Jane's tragic story.

I'm sure it hasn't escaped your attention that we are about to reach the **950th anniversary of the battle of Hastings** and the **Norman conquest** that marked the beginning of a new era in the country's past. In this month's edition we cover the event from two angles. Firstly, on page 26, Alex Burghart explores the key milestones of 1066, a year pockmarked with battles and invasions. Then, on page 33, Marc Morris considers what the real significance of the Conquest was for the inhabitants of the British Isles.

Another, more recent, milestone that we are marking is the **50th anniversary of the Aberfan disaster**, when a coal waste tip collapsed close to a Welsh village, killing 144 people, predominantly children. Filmmaker Steve Humphries has revisited the event for a new BBC documentary and on page 58 he movingly recounts the shock and the legacy of October 1966.



Rob Attar
Editor
BSME Editor of the Year 2015, Special Interest Brand

THIS ISSUE'S CONTRIBUTORS



Nicola Tallis
Lady Jane Grey is one of history's most tragic victims, but my research examines the path that brought her story to its fatal conclusion. It's full of intrigue, conflict and the battle for power.
● *Nicola reveals how Lady Jane Grey was cursed by her royal blood* ***on page 50***



Kevin Ruane
The story of Winston Churchill's transition from would-be atomic warrior in the early Cold War to nuclear peacemaker in the mid-1950s is, I think, one of the most fascinating but least well-known of his long career.
● *Kevin explores the 'nuclear' Churchill* ***on page 22***



Catherine Merridale
I've done Lenin's journey, but I stayed every night in a comfortable place or in a coupé. To do it sitting up with very little food and not knowing what was going to happen next, travelling through wartime Germany, must have been very hard.
● *Catherine discusses Lenin's epic train journey* ***on page 63***

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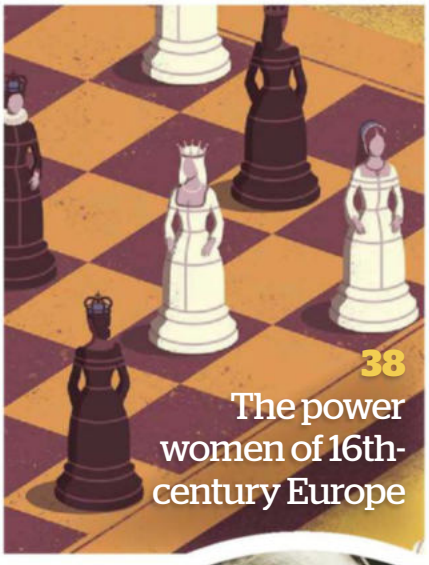
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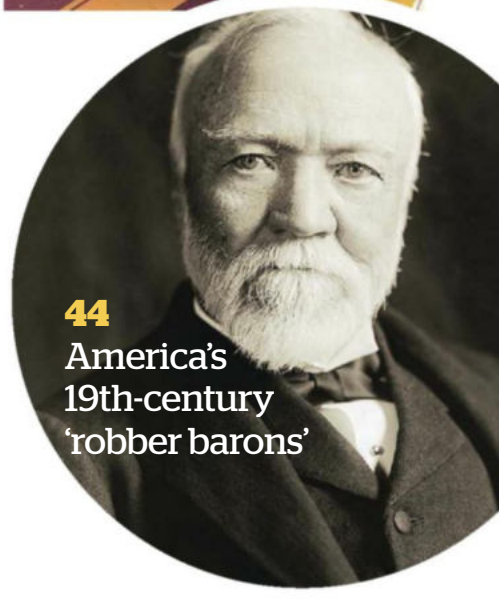
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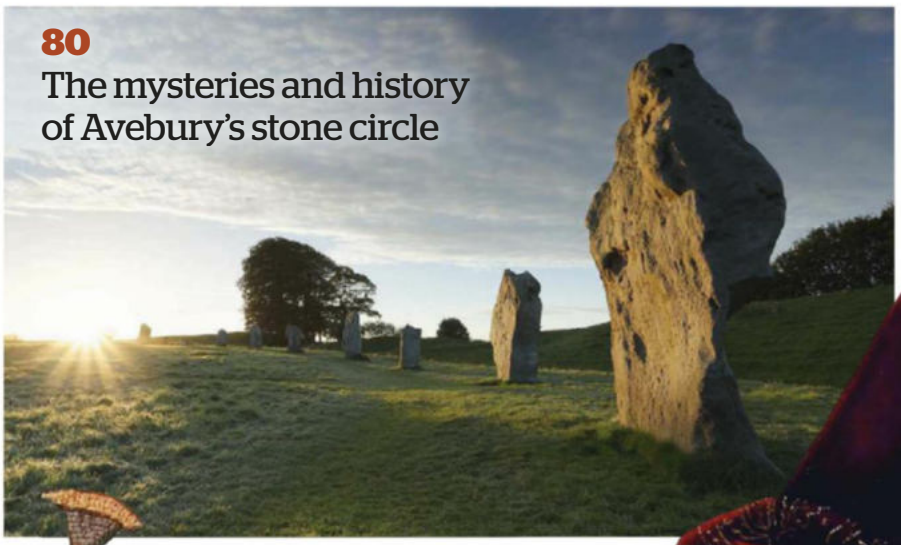


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"THE DEATH OF KING EDWARD THE CONFESSOR OPENED THE DOORS TO CHAOS"

Dominic Sandbrook highlights events that took place in **November** in history

ANNIVERSARIES

14 November 1889

Nellie Bly sets off to travel round the world

The journalist's record-breaking trip is completed in 72 days

On 14 November 1889, Nellie Bly woke with a start. Dragging herself out of bed, she tried to eat breakfast, but it was too early, and she was too excited, to want much food. "The last moment at home came," she wrote later. She kissed her family, and then hurried downstairs, "trying to overcome the hard lump in my throat that threatened to make me regret the journey that lay before me". At the door, she paused to say one last farewell. "Don't worry," she said encouragingly. "Only think of me as having a vacation and the most enjoyable time in my life."

Born Elizabeth Jane Cochran, Nellie Bly was perhaps the most famous female American journalist of her age. A year earlier, she had come up with the idea of circumnavigating the Earth, just as Phileas Fogg had done in Jules Verne's *Around the World in Eighty Days*. Her editor at *New York World* loved the idea. And so, on 14 November 1889, she sailed for London. She took with her £200, tied around her neck, as well as a small bag of essentials – including "a jar of cold cream to keep my face from chapping in the varied climates I should encounter".

Seventy-two days later, Nellie returned to New York – and a hero's welcome. "I took off my cap and wanted to yell with the crowd," she wrote, "not because I had gone around the world in 72 days, but because I was home again."



Journalist Nellie Bly became famous for her round the world trip. She's shown here on the box of an 1890 board game that was inspired by her great adventure

8 November 1519

Conquistador Cortés meets Moctezuma

The encounter leads to the fall of the Aztec empire

On the shores of Lake Texcoco, Hernán Cortés was riding towards destiny. The date was 8 November 1519 and ahead of him lay the great city of Tenochtitlán, capital of the people now known as the Aztecs. The city was teeming with life and colour, its canals and causeways lined with crowds. Nine months after he had landed at the head of a small Spanish expedition, Cortés was about to face his greatest challenge.

As Cortés's little army rode across the causeway towards Tenochtitlán, he could see a group of locals coming towards him. In the centre was the emperor, Moctezuma, carried on a beautiful litter. Cortés was keen to make a good impression. "I dismounted and stepped forward to embrace him, but the two lords who were with him stopped me with their hands so that I should not touch him; and they likewise all performed the ceremony of kissing the earth," he wrote afterwards to the Spanish king, Charles V. Cortés gave the emperor a pearl and glass necklace, which he solemnly put around his neck. In return, Moctezuma gave the Spanish captain two necklaces of his own.

Historians still dispute what the two men said that day. Did Moctezuma seriously believe, for example, that Cortés was a god, come to reclaim his kingdom? What is not in doubt, though, is the Spaniards' eagerness to emphasise that they came in peace. "There is nothing to fear," Cortés told his interpreter. "We have wanted to see him for a long time, and now we have seen his face and heard his words. Tell him that we love him well and that our hearts are contented."

Then they went into the city. Six days later, Moctezuma was a prisoner; seven months after that, he was dead.

ALAMY

Dominic Sandbrook is a historian and presenter. His series about Britain in the 1980s was shown recently on BBC Two





GETTY IMAGES

Conquistador Hernán Cortés meets the Aztec emperor Moctezuma II in a Spanish illustration, which also includes St James (on horseback). Within a few months of this encounter, Moctezuma would be dead

3 November 644
Having been stabbed by a Persian assassin three days earlier, the second Muslim caliph, Umar, dies of the wounds he received.



27 November 1807
With Napoleon's troops advancing on Lisbon, Portuguese queen Maria I (left) hurriedly makes her escape by sea to Brazil. The French invasion marked the start of the Peninsular War.

29 November 1899
Responding to a newspaper advert, a group of English, Swiss and Catalan men establish Foot-Ball Club Barcelona.



Mutineers gather to hear Gustav Noske address submarine crews at the docks in Kiel in November 1918 during the German revolution that coincided with the end of the war

AKG IMAGES/ALAMY

3 November 1918

German sailors mutiny at Kiel

As the First World War draws to a close, their refusal to go to sea launches a revolution

Germany's revolution began in the drill ground at the naval base at Kiel, on the Baltic coast. It was the afternoon of 3 November 1918, more than a week after the imperial naval command had ordered the fleet to sail out and make a last, despairing stand in the North Sea against the British.

For weeks the war had been going badly; few doubted that the mission meant suicide. With the crews having refused to obey, recent days had seen a standoff between officers and men. Some of the mutineers had been thrown into prison. The mood was tense.

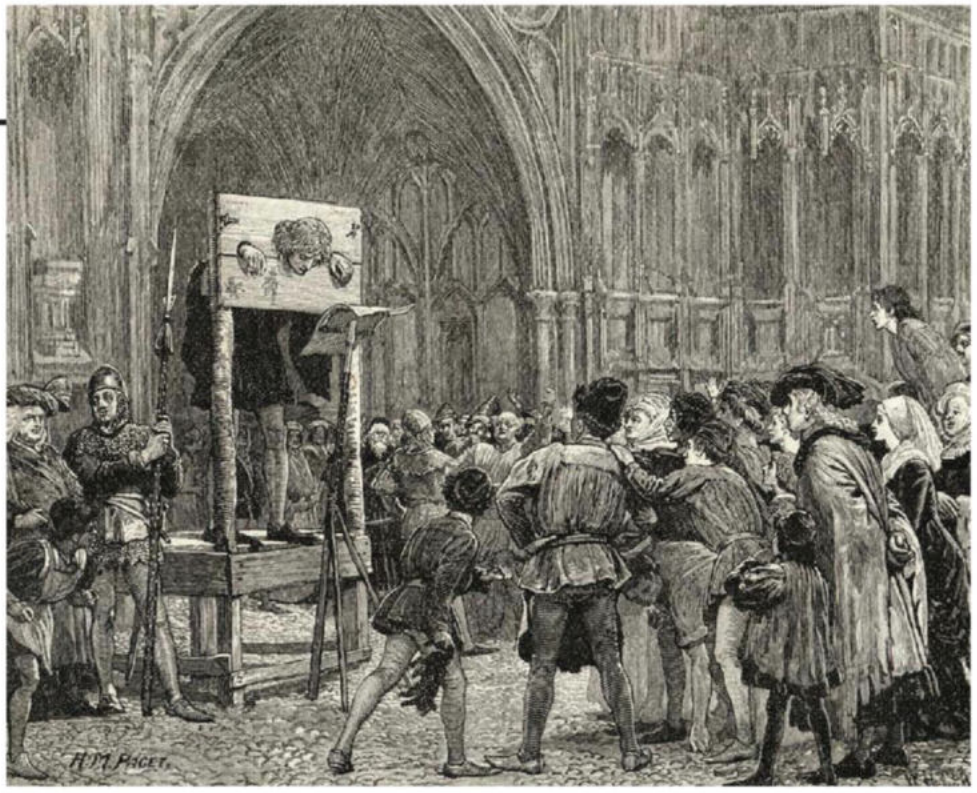
Now, joined by local trade unionists, thousand of sailors gathered at the drill ground, calling for the release of their imprisoned comrades and chanting "Peace and bread!" As they began to march towards the prison, soldiers opened fire; within moments, seven men lay dead. That night the revolution began in earnest. By the next morning, groups of mutineers were roaming the streets of Kiel, while sailors and soldiers were forming elected councils, modelled on the soviets established in Russia a year earlier. With more men joining the uprising, order collapsed; by the evening, Kiel was effectively in the hands of the rebels. When Social Democratic politician Gustav Noske arrived in the city that night, ostensibly to calm the mutiny, it was too late. Instead of giving up, the mutineers elected him chairman of the Soldiers' Council.

News of the revolt was spreading throughout Germany. After years of war and starvation, public morale had cracked. Within three days, almost every major city had gone over to the revolution. By the afternoon of 9 November Germany was a republic. Two days later, the war was over.

23 November 1499

Perkin Warbeck is executed for treason

The pretender to the throne finally loses his bid for power



Perkin Warbeck, shown above in a pillory, had claimed to be both the Earl of Warwick and one of the princes in the Tower

Perhaps it was not surprising that Perkin Warbeck's luck ran out eventually. Who knows what was going through his mind on the morning of 23 November 1499, his last day on earth, as the guards came to his cell in the Tower? What was he thinking as they tied him to the hurdle that would drag him through the streets to Tyburn? What images, what memories of his childhood in Tournai, danced before his eyes as the hangman fixed the noose around his neck and his body jerked before the jeering spectators?

Warbeck's story was, by any standards, one of the most extraordinary in our history. He seems to have been the son of a burgess, born around 1474 near the modern-day border between France and Belgium. By 1491 he was in Cork, Ireland, working for a silk merchant, and it was there that his career as a royal pretender began. At first he seems to have impersonated the Earl of Warwick, but soon he fixed on a much better role: Richard, Duke of York, the younger of the two princes in the Tower who had disappeared, and had probably been murdered, eight years earlier.

Why Warbeck did it remains a mystery. Some historians suspect that he may have been put up to it by the rulers of France and Burgundy.

Warbeck's bid for power, though, was a bit of a mess. He spent years drifting around the courts of Europe, made two botched attempts to land in England and rouse Yorkist support, and ended up as a prisoner of the Tudor king Henry VII. Only after he had made two attempts to escape, though, did Henry's patience finally run out, and he was sentenced to death for treason. "This was the end," wrote Francis Bacon a century later, "of this little cockatrice of a king."

COMMENT / Sean Cunningham

"He failed to turn national grumbling at Henry's rule into a co-ordinated rebellion"

"Perkin Warbeck's impersonation of Richard Plantagenet, Duke of York now looks haphazard and ineffective because we know that it was a disjointed failure. However, during the mid-1490s it was anything but a toothless irrelevance. The conspirators around Warbeck knew that the political leaders of the 1490s truly could not know whether Richard, Duke of York had really survived – but they were absolutely fascinated by the possibility.

They used this curiosity as a tool with which to prise apart the support that kept the Tudors in power. By playing upon the fragile alliances behind Henry VII's kingship, Warbeck's backers hoped that the king's suspicions and older loyalties of some courtiers would undermine Henry VII's control from within the corridors of power.

When the chief officers of the royal household declared for Warbeck early in 1493, this plan had a chance. But King Henry rallied other key men and showed a mastery of intrigue to outmanoeuvre the plotters close to the throne.

In the end Warbeck failed to turn national grumbling at Henry VII's rule into a co-ordinated rebellion. Yet his activities did cause the deaths of hundreds of people. We might perhaps wonder if he regretted this fact as he faced the hangman, or whether, by then, death had become a familiar part of the game that he had chosen to play."



Sean Cunningham is head of medieval records at the National Archives in Kew. He has written widely on Henry VII's reign. His new study of Henry's first son, *Prince Arthur,* is published by Amberley

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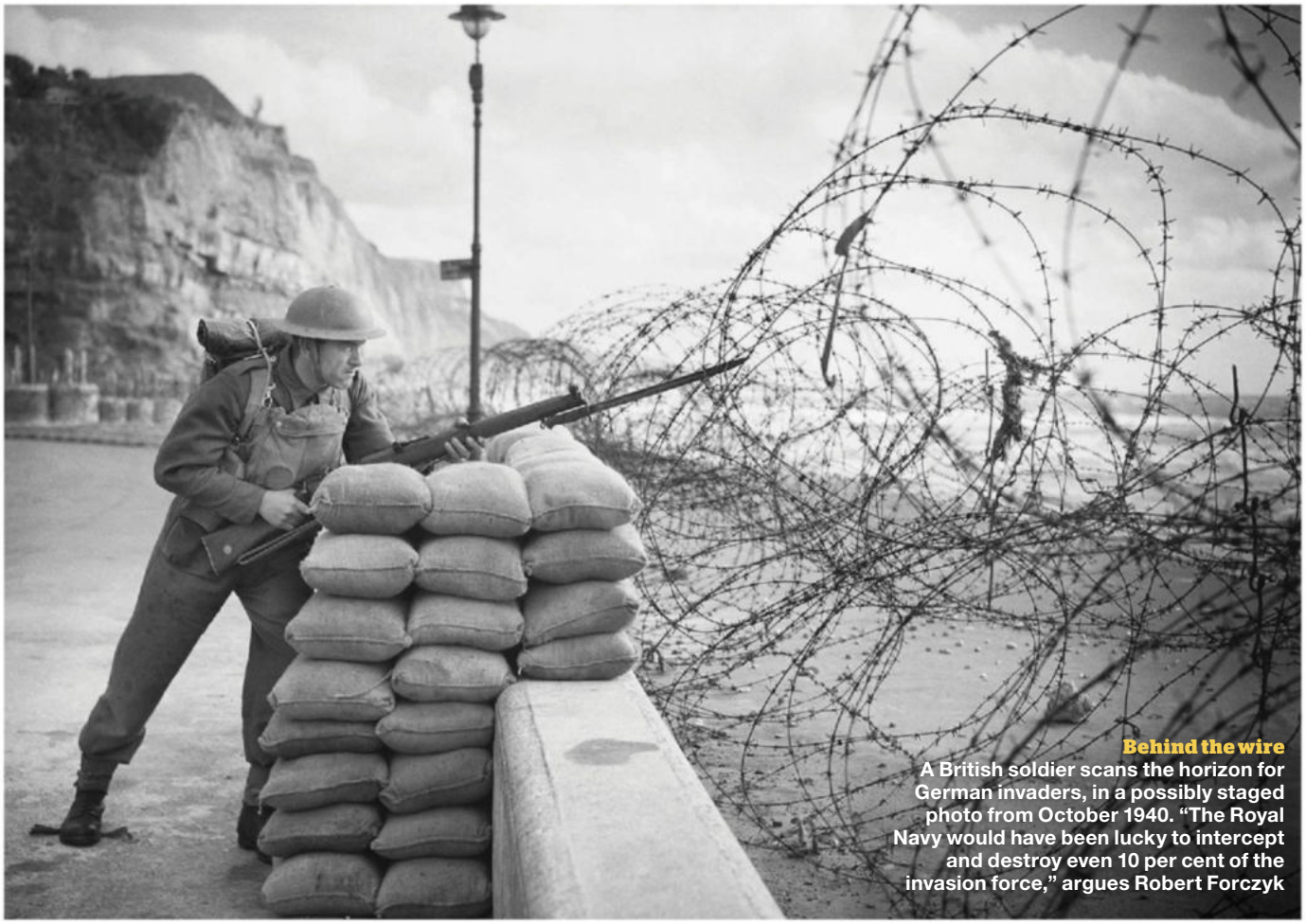
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HISTORY NOW

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Behind the wire
A British soldier scans the horizon for German invaders, in a possibly staged photo from October 1940. "The Royal Navy would have been lucky to intercept and destroy even 10 per cent of the invasion force," argues Robert Forczyk

GETTY IMAGES

Why Hitler could have invaded Britain... if he'd chosen to

A new book challenges the theory that the German navy simply didn't have the muscle to land troops in southern England in 1940. **Ellie Cawthorne** reports

Britain's future hung by a thread in the summer of 1940. Germany had the military capability to successfully transport troops across the Channel and seize parts of southern England. All that was required, argues historian Robert Forczyk in a new book on the subject, was for Hitler to give the invasion the green light.

Forczyk's book looks set to raise eyebrows because it flies in the face of received opinion. Many historians now believe that Operation Sealion – as the German invasion of Britain was codenamed – was severely compromised by the Royal Navy's superiority over the German Kriegsmarine. Hitler, they contend, recognised this and so used the apparent threat of an attack as a ploy to bring Britain to the negotiating table. In short, Sealion was, at least in part, a bluff.

Not so, argues Forczyk. "Sealion has always been derided as a rather hollow threat, because the German navy lacked the strength to conduct it and Hitler was unwilling to risk the failure," he says. "Yet



Unstoppable force? German troops during the invasion of Belgium in May 1940. Nazi Germany was better-equipped for an assault on Britain than historians have previously recognised, argues Robert Forczyk

the fact that the operation *did* not happen, does not mean that it *could* not have happened."

After examining a wealth of naval records, logs and war cabinet meeting minutes, Forczyk has concluded that, had Hitler decided to proceed, Britain would have been hard-pushed to resist. German ships, he says, could certainly have reached British shores, as Nazi naval capabilities were much stronger than historians have recognised.

Key to that strength were German invasion barges. "Many of these were armed with 20mm flak guns and howitzers: they were far from the slapdash sitting-ducks of popular perception," he says. "And while the German navy had few destroyers to deploy in the Channel, it *did* have large numbers of light warships to protect the barges from attack."

Just as German offensive capabilities have been underestimated, Britain's ability to counter a naval assault has been exaggerated, says Forczyk, whose book, *We March Against England*, is published by Osprey. "It's pretty clear that the Royal Navy would have been lucky to intercept and destroy even 10 per cent of the invasion force." Many British warships previously assumed to be operational in the area were in fact under repair, he says, and "not a single British destroyer near the Channel was equipped with either radar or rapid-firing guns". The RAF meanwhile would have been "unable to deploy in strength until the morning of the landing", says Forczyk. "Invasion forces would have had plenty of flak guns and Luftwaffe cover, so RAF losses would have been crippling."

So, if it wasn't a lack of military might that prevented Hitler from giving Sealion the go-ahead, what was it? The answer, says Forczyk, may lie in something as simple as "Hitler's whim". The Nazi leader's head appears to have been turned by the prospect of an invasion of the Soviet Union, and so, in September 1940, he postponed Sealion to concentrate on matters in the east.

Yet this did not necessarily mean that the threat was over. Hitler postponed several other operations before carrying them out at a later date – he put back the invasion of France 19 times before finally giving it the go-ahead in May 1940.

Responding to Forczyk's assertions, Leo McKinstry, author of the 2014 book *Operation Sealion* told *BBC History Magazine*: "Forczyk is right to argue that in the summer of 1940 the British cabinet and chiefs of staff were deeply concerned about the possibility of a successful German invasion. But I think the author underestimates the severe difficulties in the Reich's path, including the lack of co-ordination between their services and the huge inferiority of the Kriegsmarine compared to the Royal Navy."

> "The German navy had a large number of light warships to protect the barges from attack"

WHAT WE'VE LEARNED THIS MONTH

Many Shakespearean terms 'already existed'

Some of the phrases often believed to have been invented by William Shakespeare already existed at the time he was writing, according to an Australian academic. David McInnis from the University of Melbourne raised questions about the origins of expressions including 'a wild goose chase', thought to have been coined in *Romeo and Juliet*, but which McInnis claims was used by a poet earlier in the same decade.

At-risk heritage sites will be recreated in 3D

A team of experts has launched a project to create three-dimensional virtual reconstructions of threatened or destroyed cultural landmarks. The initiative, set up by researchers from the universities of St Andrew's, Birmingham, Bradford and Nottingham's Ningbo campus in China, invites members of the public to submit photos of sites around the world. For more details, see *visualisingheritage.org*

Experts have confirmed the cause of 1665 plague

The disease known as the 'plague' that killed thousands of people in London in 1665 has been definitively identified for the first time. Scientists examining DNA sequenced from skeletons in a burial pit found during excavation work at Liverpool Street have confirmed the presence of the *Yersinia pestis* bacterium, which causes bubonic plague. The result was widely expected, although some authors had thought that the outbreak may have had a different cause.



A contemporary print shows the last rites of a plague victim

GETTY IMAGES/ALAMY

SOCIAL HISTORY

The great 17th-century gender scare

Men in early modern England feared that they were being outnumbered by women, new research shows. By **Matt Elton**



Smoke alarm A 17th-century engraving of a woman smoking a pipe. Men were worried about independent or 'problematic' women – and believed there were too many of them

AKG IMAGES

By the middle of the 17th century, many English men believed that their country was in crisis. Civil war and plague had swept the land. Other countries in Europe and the Middle East appeared to be growing stronger. And now another threat loomed: England, it seemed, was being overrun by women.

As the University of Oxford academic Margaret Pelling details in a new study published in *The Historical Journal*, men genuinely believed that they were outnumbered by the opposite sex.

Pelling explored a range of contemporary records including books, pamphlets and religious tracts and discovered that women's numerical supremacy was widely accepted as fact – despite the absence of any statistical evidence to support it. Alchemist John Heydon offhandedly noted in a 1660 volume, "For since the number of females do far exceed the males...", while the scholar Thomas Browne declared that, due to "the unequal number of both sexes, [polygamy] may also be necessary".

How had they reached such a conclusion? Pelling points to some key factors behind it. Firstly, the Civil War had resulted in the deaths of huge numbers of men, while others had left for new lives abroad. But men were also responsible for propagating their own fears, fed by misogyny. "Early modern men were most likely to make numerical claims about women when there were too many of a 'problematic' kind," says Pelling. "Women were expected to be silent, chaste and more or less confined to the household, their identity submerged in that of a husband, father or master."

Unfortunately for those who feared that society's norms were under attack, mid-17th-century England, with its political and social upheavals, provided many reasons to worry that the natural order was being overturned, and the number of 'problem' women was, it seemed, on the rise. "Independent women were particularly objectionable," says Pelling, "especially if they banded together in shows of female solidarity for political or religious reasons."

This sense of being overwhelmed could prevail in part because people of the time were, in general, not numerically minded. That's why the work of John Graunt, a haberdasher born in London in 1620, is important. His pioneering analysis of the capital's mortality records has been celebrated for its contribution to the development of the study of populations. Yet less remarked upon, Pelling argues, is the fact that Graunt's survey tallied numbers of each sex, and demonstrates that men's fears of being outnumbered by women were – in London, at least – unfounded.

> "Women were expected to be silent, chaste, and more or less confined to the household"

"As Graunt showed, slightly more men were born than women – which meant that an equal balance could be maintained," says Pelling. This balance – then as now – was roughly equal: slightly more men are born than women, and slightly more men die earlier.

And, just as the ratio of the sexes remains the same, Pelling believes that the attitudes Graunt addressed still exist in the present day "Even though we now live in the 'information age', we can see every day that what Graunt established was true: that our sense of our own demography is both approximate and prone to be dominated by cultural factors."

The historians' view...

What is the political impact of high youth unemployment?

As rates of unemployment among young people soar in Europe and the Middle East, a historian and economist consider this phenomenon's impact on societies in the past, and what it might mean in the future

Interviews by **Chris Bowlby**, a BBC journalist specialising in history



Leaders of Spain's radical leftwing Podemos party shout slogans at a 2016 rally. "Even when the whole economy is doing well, unskilled people are left behind – and they are angry," says historian Harold James

> "Today, youth unemployment is driving some protest movements – in particular, radical leftwing movements in southern Europe
>
> **PROFESSOR HAROLD JAMES**

Europe has lost its young people. As industrial societies in Europe – but also in Japan – age rapidly, the demographic pyramid is inverting and bulging at the top. Politicians need to respond to demographics. Old people win elections. Young people do not even bother to vote. So governments all over Europe come up with expensive pension systems and (especially in southern Europe) employment legislation that privileges older insiders and excludes new entrants – young people.

Current rates of youth unemployment are unprecedented over the past century, though there was also considerable youth unemployment during the Great Depression. In many more-developed industrial economies at that time, such data for unemployment that exists shows that young people were often less likely to be unemployed. In the UK it was common for employers to hire cheap young workers on very low wages not subject to agreements with trade unions, then to fire them when they reached the age when the much higher adult wage would kick in. There is much less data for this era outside the UK, Scandinavia and Germany, because there was little in the way of social insurance, but it is reasonable to assume that low demand was reflected in underemployment (for example, reduced hours of work) rather than unemployment, as is characteristic of more rural societies.

There were also earlier eras in which substantial numbers of university graduates could not find suitable jobs, especially after large expansions of university education. In central Europe in the 1840s, for instance, after a general agricultural and manufacturing slowdown, students and former students formed part of a radicalised population that fomented the revolutions of 1848. In the 1970s, oil crises and stagflation (persistent high inflation, high unemployment and stagnant demand) also followed a period of expansion of universities but, paradoxically, the result was not to radicalise students but rather to instill a drive for more conformity as they competed for available jobs.

Sometimes commentators contrast the situation today with the world of the Great Depression, pointing out that social security provision prevents complete pauperisation, hence avoiding a really violent backlash. That analysis understates the anger that unemployment and marginalisation produce – and the political instability that is already resulting. Today, youth unemployment is driving some protest movements – in particular, radical leftwing movements in southern Europe such as Podemos in Spain and Syriza in Greece. In former socialist countries of eastern and south-eastern Europe, where the problem is as severe as in southern Europe, most youth radicalisation takes the form of support not for leftwing populism but for rightwing and nationalist movements.

Emigration can often serve as a vent for discontent. That was the case in the 19th century, as it is today. It may be associated with a loss of skills as trained nurses, policemen or teachers in poor countries, faced by poor prospects, go to richer countries where they take up unskilled jobs. For young unskilled people in rich countries relatively unaffected by the structural Euro crisis, such as Sweden, the UK or Germany, newcomers to the labour market are pushing down wages and also blocking jobs. So even when the whole economy is doing well, unskilled people are left behind – and they are angry.



Professor Harold James is a professor of history and international affairs at Princeton University



PA/GETTY



The burning of the Château d'Eau in Paris during the 1848 'February revolution', which was partly a result of youth unemployment



Migrant workers in Dubai queue for a bus to their labour camp. Migrants now comprise 80–85 per cent of the UAE's workforce

> The paradox is that Gulf countries employ a massive foreign (imported) workforce, yet face double-digit national unemployment rates

DR HASSAN HAKIMIAN

In the Middle East, high youth unemployment has been closely connected to demography. Continued high fertility across the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region in the 1980s and 1990s became widely known as the 'demographic puzzle'. It seemed as if the demographic transition (a combined process of decline in both mortality and birth rates), widely witnessed in other societies during economic development, had either stalled or was missing in MENA. With the oil boom after the 1970s, infant mortality and death rates declined but there was little sign of a slowdown in fertility and birth rates.

Iran is a notable example. After the 1979 revolution, the new Islamic administration abolished the former Shah's family-planning clinics, lowered the legal age of marriage for girls to nine years and introduced monetary incentives to promote early marriage. In less than a decade, population growth was one of the highest in the world.

Other poorer, non-oil economies experienced high population growth rates. In Yemen in 2010, half of the population was 17 or younger. The rapid rise in the number of young people created challenges for education, housing and, above all, job markets. In the Gulf Co-operation Council (GCC) countries about 30 per cent of the population is still below 30 years of age, and regional youth unemployment is above 20 per cent.

The paradox is that GCC countries employ a massive foreign (imported) workforce, yet face double-digit national unemployment rates. According to the International Labour Organisation, in 2009 Saudi Arabia's national unemployment rate was 11 per cent, its youth unemployment rate around 40 per cent. To meet their labour needs GCC states have in recent decades relied on large numbers of immigrants from other Arab countries and Asia. In Qatar migrants represent a staggering 94 per cent of the workforce and 87 per cent of the population. In the UAE, those figures are around 80–85 per cent.

Women's labour force participation rates in the MENA region are also among the lowest in the world. However, this is likely to change – albeit slowly – as more women are educated; the region's female university population already exceeds the male one.

What have been the political consequences of growing youth unemployment? Young people have had a notably active presence in the recent Arab uprisings. The youth bulge epitomised the frustrations of a young population well connected to the outside world, whose hopes and expectations were arguably shaped by international norms, yet with a standard of living that was constrained by far more limited local realities. This led to simmering frustrations with autocratic polities where the scope for individual and civil freedoms was poor or non-existent. High unemployment and crony systems of capitalism, which favoured political connections at the expense of meritocracy, compounded these frustrations. Widespread youth protests acted as a conduit for street-level demands for change, playing an active part in bringing down many reigning autocrats. ■



Dr Hassan Hakimian is director of the Middle East Institute at SOAS University of London

DISCOVER MORE

BOOKS

- **The Euro and the Battle of Ideas** by Markus K Brunnermeier, Harold James and Jean-Pierre Landau (Princeton UP, 2016)
- **Lineages of Revolt** by Adam Hanieh (Haymarket, 2013)

OLD NEWS

An extraordinary inquest into an ancient treasure trove

Birmingham Daily Post
2 April 1863

In the spring of 1863 Mr NP Kell, the coroner for Hastings, was required to consider a delicate and unusual matter: the theft of a number of bars of gold in Sussex. On 12 January William Butchers was ploughing in the parish of Mountfield and unearthed a bunch of old brass, "connected by a series of links or bars, and extending about a yard in length".

William sold the 'old brass' for three shillings (the equivalent of about £12 today) to Silas Thomas, who sold it on to his brother-in-law, Stephen Willett – a former Californian gold digger who immediately recognised that the metal was solid gold. Thomas and Willett exchanged the gold with a banker in Cheapside for £530 (almost £45,000 today) and set themselves up as gentlemen of leisure.

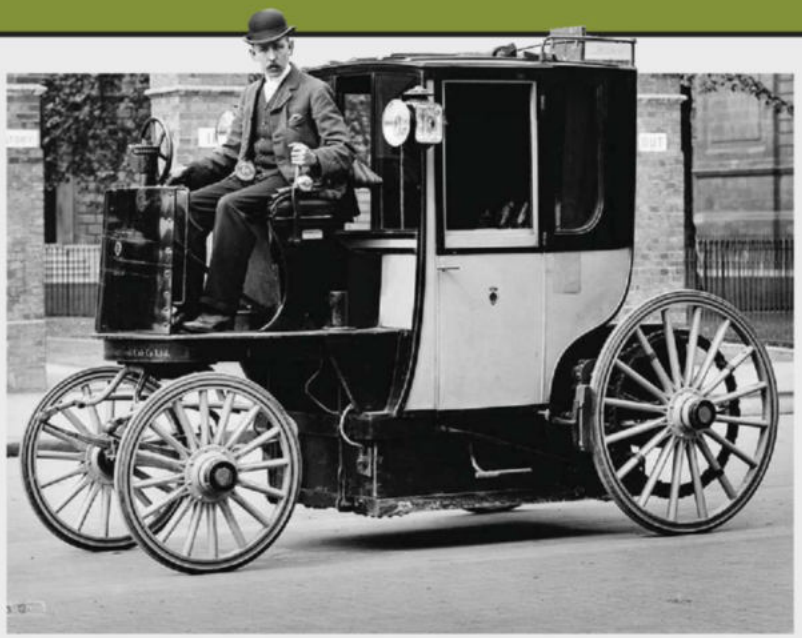
This newfound wealth attracted the attention of the police. Investigations determined that the gold ("ornaments worn by the ancient Celtic kings", believed to be 2,000 years old) was treasure trove, by law belonging to the Queen. The men were relieved of their new fortune and charged with theft.



ILLUSTRATION BY BEN JONES

News story sourced from *britishnewspaper archive.co.uk* and rediscovered by **Fern Riddell**. Fern regularly appears on BBC Radio 3's *Free Thinking*

PAST NOTES
TAXIS



An electric cab, pictured in c1900. These had a range of 30 miles per charge

As Uber usage soars, with 30,000 app downloads each week in London alone, **Julian Humphrys** hails the early history of the taxi cab

Why do we call them taxis?
Because they're fitted with 'taximeters' to calculate fares based on distance travelled and waiting time. The original taximeter was a late 19th-century German invention, and from 1907 all of Lon n's motor were obliged to have one fitted.

What's a Hackney carriage?
Today it has a legal meaning. Unlike a minicab, which has to be pre-booked, a Hackney carriage is licensed to 'ply for hire' – its driver can wait at a cab rank or be flagged down in the street.

Did they originate in Hackney?
No. The name derives from the horses that pulled the carriages before they were motorised. A hackney – from the Old French word *hacquenée* – was originally a general-purpose horse that was particularly suitable for hire.

And what was a hansom cab?
A light, two-wheeled carriage with a folding hood pulled by a single horse, a hansom carried two passengers while the driver sat on an elevated seat to the rear. Originally designed and patented in 1834 by Joseph Hansom, a York architect, it was modified and improved a couple of years later by Loughborough engineer John Chapman, but the Hansom name was retained.

Why 'cab'?
It's short for cabriolet. Though we now the word to describe a convertible vehicle, the name was originally coined to describe how the carriage lightly bounded along, adapting the ballet term 'cabriole'.

When did motorised cabs first appear on Britain's streets?
In August 1897. Given the current boom in electric cars it's interesting to note that the early motor cabs also ran on electricity. Sometimes known as Berseys – after Walter Bersey, the manager of the London Electric Cab Company that ran them – they were popularly called 'hummingbirds' for the low noise these battery-operated vehicles made. Unfortunately, silence wasn't necessarily golden: because it was hard to hear them coming these cabs were considered a menace to pedestrians and horses alike. But the main problem with them was that they were expensive to run. Their considerable weight meant that their tyres wore out quickly. In 1898 there were 75 electric cabs in action, but they were all withdrawn by the turn of the century.

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LETTERS

Brothers in arms

LETTER OF THE MONTH

I read with great interest the article in your September issue entitled *Killing Hitler's Hangman*.

My brother and I had learned about these events from my dad during the 1950s. He was a friend of Jerry Bublik, brother of Josef Bublik, the paratrooper who played a major part in the assassination of Heydrich. I believe that Jerry had been a paratrooper as well. Josef was part of the team that was sent to assassinate Heydrich, and died alongside the others in the crypt of the church where they were hiding. They were unable to get them out and so they poured water into the opening to drown them. Jerry was very proud of his brother and never forgot him.

Jerry worked in the civil service in London in the 1950s with my dad, a war veteran who served with the 21st Army Group. Jerry, like my dad, loved chess; both played for the chess team. My brother, Paul, met him once. He looked like his brother Josef and had a hearty sense of humour.

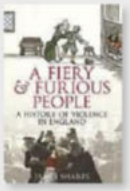
The conversations must have been fascinating, although the facts were harrowing. They were brave men and all their names should be remembered.

Ros Heller, Ilford



A memorial above the crypt where the paratrooper Josef Bublik died

● We reward the letter of the month writer with our 'History Choice' book of the month. This issue it is *A Fiery & Furious People: A History of Violence in England* by James Sharpe. Read the review on page 67



Did botulism kill Heydrich?

The account of Reinhard Heydrich's assassination in your September issue alluded to "an infection in the stomach cavity setting in", which ultimately led to Heydrich's death. I remember reading an account of his assassination some time ago in a book titled *A Higher Form of Killing* by Jeremy Paxman and Robert Harris. This book is essentially a history of biological and chemical warfare.

The authors claim that the assassins were given a grenade, made at Porton Down, that contained the *botulinum* bacteria. A fragment of the grenade that exploded infected Heydrich, causing him to die from botulism.

Martin Verrall, Hove

The Suez affair

The interview with Alex von Tunzelmann in the September issue (*Books*) dealt with the Suez Canal 'war' but made no mention of the background to this unfortunate affair, which is hardly fair to the government of the day.

For many years before 1869, British merchant shipping had to travel well over 4,000 miles to get to India. That year, the canal – which had taken 10 years to construct – was completed and it reduced the journey by several thousand miles. It was a tremendous saving.



Should our interview with Alex von Tunzelmann (left) about the Suez crisis have offered more context?

In 1875 Britain acquired shares in the canal from the Ottoman ruler of Egypt. Then in 1956 it was nationalised. It was this that prompted the invasion by Britain, France and Israel. After UN intervention the Egyptians opened the canal again in 1957.

Having owned the canal for such a long period of time, and because of the saving in journey length it allowed for, the canal was important to the government of the day. Their reluctance to lose control of it is understandable even if one feels the UN decision was the correct one.

As an ex-sapper, whose demob was delayed because of Suez, I felt the full story of it needed to be told.

Alan W Tilley, Somerset

Remembrance on wheels

In the September issue Michael Wood (*Comment*) discusses the collective memory and its impact on keeping the past alive. This type of memory can often be very localised and all areas of the country have their semi-legendary people and events. Locally, we still remember the Yorkshire 'Witch' Mary Bateman, hanged for murder at York in 1809 and, even more parochially, the infamous Dripping Riot of 1865 in Leeds.

Wood discusses the impact of the battle of the Somme and how it affected places such as my home town of Leeds and especially smaller communities such as Accrington. The impact of the slaughter of the first day of the battle on a small mill town like Accrington was immense, with a collective unspoken commitment to remembrance.

One way this was done was to paint the town's trams and buses in the red and blue/black of the East Lancashire Regiment's dress uniform as a 'living' memorial to the fallen. The colours continued to be used until the 1980s when the council company was sold to an outside company. This type of ongoing memorial is very unusual and, for it to last for 70 years, remarkable.

I think collective memory is a vital part of the interpretation of how history affects us all.

Chris Hough, Farsley

MIKE ABRAHAMS

The opinions expressed by our commentators are their own and may not represent the views of *BBC History Magazine* or the Immediate Media Company



Londoners queue to buy food amid bomb-damaged buildings, November 1940. Can their sufferings be compared to those of the people of Paris?

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London and Paris at war

The interview with Anne Sebba (*Books*, August) raises a question in my mind.

Other than the very major difference of German occupation, the civilian life experience in France (and of women in particular) cannot have been much different in Paris than it was in London, where I was raised as a child during the war years.

Food shortages, daily queuing and the black market were common in both cities. Parisians had to deal with the presence of German overlords. London had to deal with the German Luftwaffe.

The author states that French women had to deal with the absence of so many French men and that Paris became a significantly feminised city. I doubt that Paris was so different from London. Given the health care that was available in this era, a significant number of men were deemed unfit for active service. My father was one and served in the ARP. Others served in the Home Guard.

The older men served in similar ways. Then there were the 'reserved trades'. These were jobs where the individual was deemed of more use to the war effort by continuing in his civilian job than anything he might contribute by being in the army. Any young man facing call-up could avoid conscription by becoming a 'Bevin boy'. Life in the coal mines could exempt almost anyone from active service. Finally there were the young men who might have been 16 years of age in 1939 but grew up to be men during the war or at least until their number was called.

All told there were a lot of men who were still around their families. London did not become 'significantly feminised' and even if the husband was gone there was often a brother, uncle, or other close relative to help out. I find it hard to believe that Paris was much different.

Alan Davies, San Diego

Corrections

● In the article about Eleanor of Aquitaine in our August issue, we wrote that Richard I had married Berengaria of Navarre in Sicily. As reader Lynne Barrett points out, the wedding actually took place in Limassol, Cyprus.

WRITE TO US

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SOCIAL MEDIA

What you've been saying on Twitter and Facebook

@HistoryExtra: Who do you think was the best couple in history and why?

@kwilsonlee Antony and Cleopatra for the sheer chutzpah of taking on the might of Rome together - sexy, if doomed

@mikedartagnan William Cavendish, 1st Duke of Newcastle and 'mad' Margaret Lucas. A pair of quintessential English eccentrics

Jo Morgan JFK and Jackie Kennedy - they represented a whole new future

@konallis Peter Abelard and Héloïse - true lovers and intellectual equals. And they started the trend of weird celebrity baby names

@EmmelineDownie Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera - the weirdest love story in history!

@TheWildHogg Ferdinand and Isabella of Spain, Augustus and Livia, FDR and Eleanor Roosevelt, Justinian and Theodora - they were all power couples

Janelle Gerke John of Gaunt and Katherine Swynford. Not only because they were lovers for many years who eventually married, but also because their descendants can be found in royal houses of York, Tudor and Stuart, down to the royal family of today.

@cajunjen Henry II & Eleanor of Aquitaine. They protected their people and bettered the system

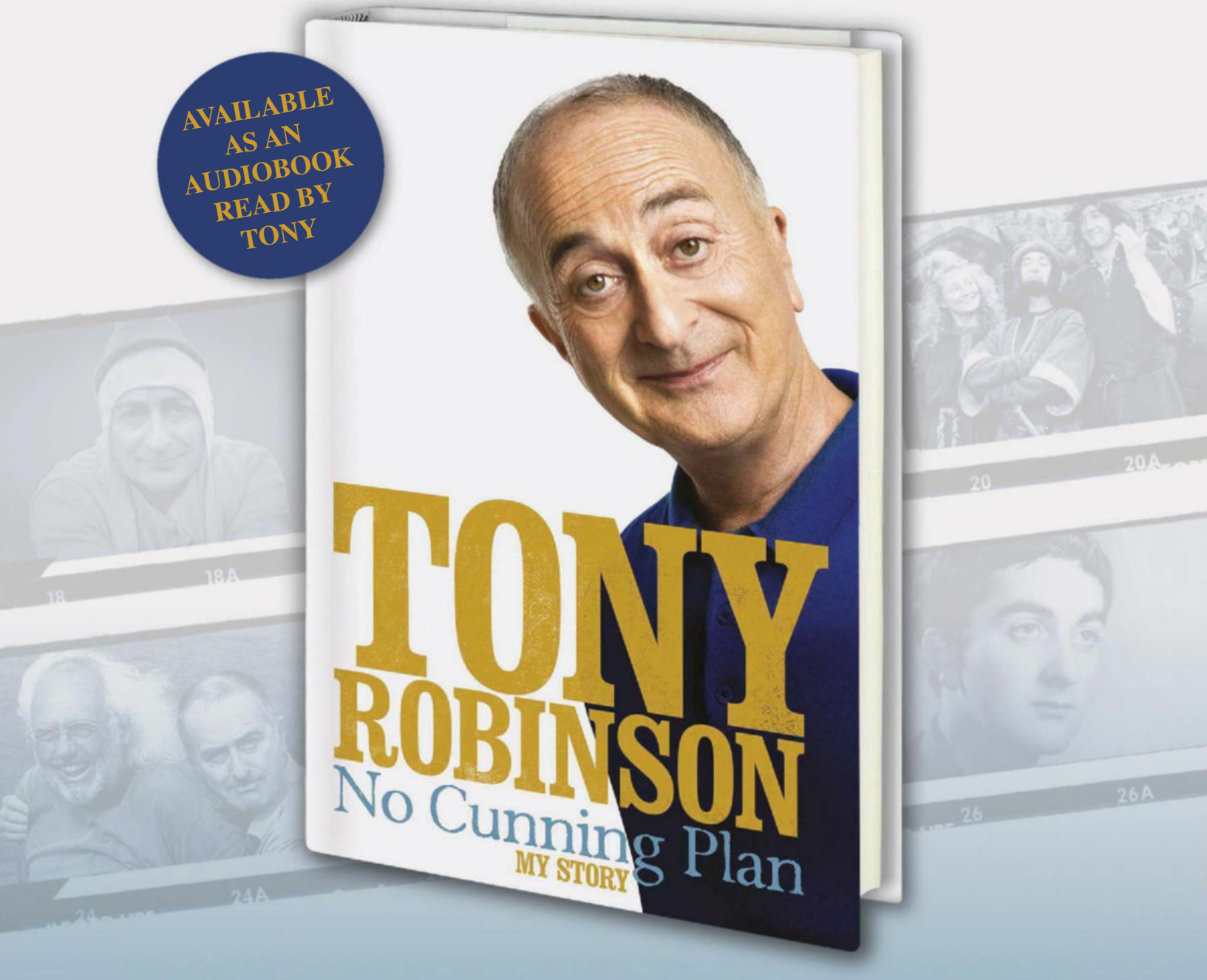
Hayley Charlotte Elizabeth I and Robert Dudley - a couple who have kept us guessing for almost 500 years

@oliviamyfanwy The Welsh dragon and the white rose: Henry VII and Elizabeth of York. I've always felt that they're underrated as a medieval couple

@Aylett1990 The pirates Anne Bonny and Captain Jack Rackham, because their rebelliousness broke social norms

Luka Hammo I'm for Æthelflaed and Æthelred. Together they ruled their kingdom and protected their people. So much were they bonded that she continued to reign as lady of Mercia after her husband's death. They are one of the first couples in royalty, if not the first, to work as a team and be respected equally.

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Michael Wood on... **ancient cultural exchanges**

"The story of Xuanzang tells us what civilisation really is"

When two civilisations first come into contact, it is not always peaceful and not always enriching. To really open up to another culture requires patience and humility: you need to be willing to shed your own preconceptions, to be confident enough in your own civilisation, to be prepared to be changed by the experience of the Other.

This occasionally happened on a grand scale: think of the Arabic and Persian translations of the Greek legacy, or the attempt to find a 'meeting of two oceans' of Islam and Hinduism under the Mughals. And as John Grove's letter reminded us in last month's magazine, one of the greatest was when the Chinese Buddhist monk and scholar Xuanzang made his incredible journey to India in AD 629 to bring the authentic Buddhist scriptures back to China.

The synchronicities of history can be really striking. At the moment Xuanzang reached Kashmir a few years later, Buddhism may well have had more followers than any other organised religion. In June 632, far to the west in Medina, the Prophet Muhammad died, having enjoined his followers to "seek knowledge as far as China". An amazing new epoch in the history of the world was about to begin – one that would, within a single century, see the establishment of the Caliphate and the spread of Islam across a swathe of the world between Spain and the Indus valley. Farther to the east, China's reception of Buddhism would transform its culture and begin the spread of that religion to Japan, Korea and elsewhere in east Asia – today home to most of its half-billion followers.

Xuanzang's journey has long fascinated me. In 1984 I travelled the Silk Road, along the old caravan routes he'd traversed in the far west of China. In the late 1990s, while tracking Alexander the Great in central Asia, I hit his trail again. And more recently, while shooting *The Story of China* for BBC Two, I returned to his monasteries, now again full of monks proudly keeping his memory alive.

Xuanzang spent 16 years away from his homeland, travelling all over India and studying Sanskrit and Pali. When he returned to China in 645 he brought back 600 manuscripts of the Buddhist scriptures, and founded a translation bureau in the Tang-dynasty capital, Chang'an (today's Xi'an), to have them transcribed into Chinese. "It was my life's task," he said. The Great Wild Goose Pagoda, built to store his manuscripts, still stands, as does the small monastery that is his final resting place in a delectable wooded valley outside the city. Spared at the express command of Mao's premier Zhou Enlai (or so its abbot told me long ago), the monastery's library still holds palm-leaf manuscripts in the Pali language of Sri Lanka.

A stone stele there shows Xuanzang, with a rucksack on his back and a lamp to light his way, braving the elements to bring home his precious cargo. Copies of his letters written to his old Indian friends nearly 20 years later have only recently become available in English, and they are among the most arresting texts in the history of civilisation. To one abbot of Magadha he sent news from China: "The great emperor of the Tang (Taizong) with compassion of a *chakravarti-raja* rules in tranquility and spreads the teachings of the Buddha: he has even penned with his own hand a preface to a translation he ordered copied and circulated, and it is being studied too by neighbouring countries."

In his letter to the abbot of Bodhgaya the tone is even more touching, particularly in light of the fact that they belonged to opposing schools of Buddhism: "It has been a long time now since we parted, which has only increased my admiration for you… Now there is a messenger returning to India, I send you my sincere regards and a little memento as a token of my gratitude. It is too inadequate to express my deep feelings for you. I hope you appreciate that... This much for the present. Yours, the monk Xuanzang."

I find this exchange incredibly touching. Coming from just before the age of Beowulf in England, and at the time of the Arab conquests in the near east, the story of Xuanzang tells us what civilisation really is. H

Michael Wood is professor of public history at the University of Manchester. Download his BBC Two series *The Story of China*, which features Xuanzang's journey to India, at *store.bbc.com/the-story-of-china*

BBC TWO



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ILLUSTRATION BY FEMKE DE JONG

WINSTON CHURCHILL: ATOMIC WARRIOR, NUCLEAR PEACEMAKER



At the dawn of the Cold War, Churchill was one of the west's leading champions of the atomic bomb. But, as Britain found itself in the crosshairs of a Soviet attack, his attitude changed – and that, writes **Kevin Ruane**, set him at odds with the United States

ILLUSTRATION BY HUGH COWLING

In 2013, a short royal family home-movie came to light. Dating from early October 1952, it shows Queen Elizabeth II, eight months into her reign, enjoying a family fishing expedition at Balmoral. Also prominent is the unmistakable figure of Winston Churchill, returned as prime minister a year earlier and now, a month shy of his 78th birthday, the Queen's honoured guest.

Churchill sits at the water's edge, chatting amiably to a young Prince Charles. He is relaxed but he is not off-duty. His thoughts, we now know, regularly drifted from autumnal Scotland to a barren, windswept outpost of the Commonwealth called the Montebello Islands. There, 80 miles off the coast of north-west Australia, Britain's first atomic bomb was about to be tested.

For Churchill, a great deal rested on the success of Operation Hurricane, as the test was codenamed, not least Britain's admission to the exclusive A-bomb 'club' alongside the US and the Soviet Union. "Pop or flop?" Churchill asked his scientific advisors in the build-up to the test. "Pop!" came the reassuring reply.

On 3 October 1952, the Hurricane device exploded with a violence greater than either of the A-bombs used against Japan in 1945.

In the decade after 1945, the A-bomb and "its monstrous child, the hydrogen bomb" played a critical part in shaping Churchill's Cold War outlook



We have no record of what Churchill said to the Queen later that day. How did a former cavalry officer of the late Victorian era explain that now, at the dawn of the second Elizabethan Age, he had in his hands not a sword but a weapon containing the pulsing energy that fuels the stars? Did he dwell on the fate of Hiroshima and Nagasaki? Two bombs, two flashes, and 100,000 dead in an instant.

If he also thought to himself "At last!", that would be understandable. Churchill had waited a long time for this moment.

Nuclear ambitions

In August 1941, with Britain in the throes of a global war, Churchill gave the go-ahead for a top-secret effort to build a super-weapon – an atomic bomb. A passion for new military technology, a love of science fiction (HG Wells was a favourite) and, above all, the dread thought of an A-bomb in Hitler's hands should Nazi scientists win the battle of the laboratories, ensured his backing for Tube Alloys, as the project was christened.

Following the US's entry into the war, Tube Alloys became subsumed into the much larger Manhattan Project, the American bomb programme. However, in a series of agreements with President Franklin D Roosevelt, Churchill defended Britain's rights as an atomic partner of the US and established the principle of mutual consent by those two partners before the use of any weapon.

By mid-1945 an A-bomb was combat-ready, and Harry Truman, who had became president following Roosevelt's death in the spring, duly sought Churchill's consent to employ the bomb against Japan.

The war in Europe was over but the war in Asia was expected to grind on for another 18 months. Mindful of the great loss of Allied life that was bound to result from an invasion of Japan, Churchill gave his consent willingly. In August 1945, in the wake of the obliteration of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan surrendered unconditionally. To Churchill, it was clearly cause and effect.

If Churchill's role in the Second World War's atomic end-game is seldom acknowledged, the 'nuclear Churchill' of the Cold War is arguably even less well known. Yet, in the decade after 1945, the A-bomb – "the perfected means of human destruction", as Churchill described it – and "its monstrous child, the hydrogen bomb", played a critical part in shaping his Cold War outlook.

Soon after losing office in July 1945, Churchill began sounding the alarm over the next great threat to freedom in Europe. With the Red Army occupying eastern Europe, and with Soviet dictator Josef Stalin refusing to honour previous pledges to permit democratic elections in the area, Churchill called on the US – most famously in his March 1946 'Iron Curtain' speech – to take the lead in organising the free world's resistance to Soviet communism.

When, in 1947, Truman answered the call, the Cold War really began to bite. But Churchill also entertained 'hot war' thoughts. He was keen for the US to exploit its atomic monopoly by issuing an ultimatum to Stalin to accept peace in Europe on western terms – or face the nuclear consequences. As Churchill put it to the US ambassador in 1948, the time had come to tell the Soviets that if they did not 'retire' from East Germany and eastern Europe, "we will raze their cities".

Churchill knew that his views would be poorly received by a British public still hopeful that differences with the USSR could be resolved peaceably, and he mostly pressed the merits of atomic diplomacy in private. This has led some historians to conclude that Churchill was blustering or bluffing. But the vehemence with which he spoke of a nuclear showdown suggests a seriousness born of his loathing of Stalinist totalitarianism.

The US opted for the patient, long-term containment of the USSR in preference to atomic menaces. In February 1950, Churchill's own outlook appeared to change when he called publicly for a Cold War 'summit' – the first time the term had been used to describe a meeting of the great powers.

What prompted this shift? Six months earlier, the USSR successfully tested an atomic device. In a flash, the American nuclear monopoly disappeared. A disturbed Truman



Thermonuclear dawn A 10.4-megaton device, codenamed Ivy Mike, is detonated by the US on 1 November 1952 at Enewetak Atoll in the South Pacific. It was the world's first thermonuclear test and made Britain's own recently acquired nuclear bomb seem puny by comparison



Transatlantic rift Churchill, flanked by Anthony Eden, on his return from a conference with US president Dwight D Eisenhower in 1954. By this point in the Cold War, with Britain in range of Soviet bombs, Churchill was growing increasingly alarmed by American sabre-rattling

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administration responded by advancing plans to develop a hydrogen bomb – a thermonuclear weapon with a destructive potential many hundreds of times greater than the A-bombs used against Japan. This was the troubled backdrop against which Churchill issued his call for a summit.

At the time, Labour accused him of insincerity and of preying on popular nuclear nervousness merely to win votes – and unsuccessfully so, since Churchill lost the February 1950 general election. The Labour charge does seem to have merit. Over the following 18 months, Churchill repeatedly argued that the Americans should use their atomic superiority (if no longer monopoly) to try to shape a European peace on western terms. The summit Churchill envisioned would not involve negotiations in the true sense of the word: there would be no give and take, only atomic-infused dictation.

Britain in the bull's-eye

In October 1951, when Churchill finally returned as prime minister, nuclear issues were becoming pressing. Under Labour, the US had been granted bases for its atomic-capable B-29 bombers in East Anglia. This, Churchill recognised, put the UK in the bull's-eye of Soviet nuclear retaliation if the Cold War ever escalated into World War Three.

At the same time, Churchill applauded the efforts of his predecessor, Clement Attlee, in pursuing a British A-bomb. The prospect of a postwar Anglo-American nuclear partnership had been thwarted when the US congress passed the 1946 McMahon Act prohibiting collaboration with other countries. This meant that the Attlee government was forced to build a bomb from its own limited resources. In October 1952, the success of the Labour-inspired Operation Hurricane left the Tory Churchill as the first prime minister in British history to have at his disposal a nuclear weapon.

This triumph was soon overshadowed by the news that the US had tested an enormous (10.4-megaton) device in the Pacific. In comparison, the British bomb was puny – a mere 25 kilotons. However, because the US authorities refused to confirm that their test involved a hydrogen bomb, it was the USSR that was able to claim in August 1953 that it had become the world's first thermonuclear power. The Soviet H-bomb jolted Churchill. "We were now as far from the age of the atomic bomb as the atomic bomb itself from the bow and arrow," he reflected.

By 1954, the spectre of the H-bomb had wrought a profound – and this time genuine – change in Churchill's Cold War outlook. That February, President Dwight D Eisenhower confirmed that the US possessed deliverable

"Even if some of us temporarily survive in some deep cellar," Churchill reflected, "there will be nothing left to do but to take a pill to end it all"

hydrogen bombs. Then, the following month, when the US tested a monstrous 15-megaton H-bomb in the Pacific, Churchill learned a new word: fallout.

Codenamed Bravo, the US test generated clouds of radioactive debris that drifted many miles from ground zero, showering a Japanese tuna trawler with toxic ash. Around the world, panic spread that the H-bomb was out of control. An ill-judged statement by the chairman of the US Atomic Energy Commission, claiming that a single H-bomb could destroy New York City, pushed anxiety levels higher still.

Churchill was more disturbed than most. According to a top-secret report from his nuclear experts, 10 hydrogen bombs dropped on 10 major UK cities would kill one-third of the country's population instantly, and expose a further third to the fatal effects of fallout. No wonder he confessed to being "more worried by the hydrogen bomb than by all the rest of my worries put together".

The apocalyptic implications of the "horror bomb", as the British press dubbed it, went on to reinvigorate Churchill's quest for a summit. It also invested that quest with real sincerity. Never again did he speak of dictating to Moscow. Instead, with Stalin dead and his successors in the Kremlin talking of peaceful co-existence, Churchill dedicated the final year of his premiership to bringing about east–west reconciliation.

But while he was working for peace, Churchill took no risks with national security. He viewed the H-bomb as the ultimate deterrent and, in July 1954, he persuaded his cabinet that Britain must have its own weapon. Three years later, the UK would graduate as the world's third thermonuclear power.

The threat of America

For most historians, Churchill's H-bomb decision reflected his preoccupation with national prestige – the bomb was a status symbol – and, more especially, his determination to keep his country safe from danger.

But what kind of danger? Ironically, by 1954 Churchill was almost as worried by the nuclear policies of the US, Britain's ally, as he was by the threat from the Soviet enemy.

In February, Eisenhower wrote Churchill an emotionally charged letter about the need to "throw back the Russian threat" and "sharpen up [one's] sword for the struggle that cannot possibly be escaped". To Churchill, the US seemed to be contemplating what he called a "forestalling" war on the USSR before the latter could develop intercontinental bombers or rockets – and this made him deeply uneasy.

In 1954, the US was beyond the range of Soviet bombers. Not so the UK – it would be devastated by any H-bomb assault. "Even if some of us temporarily survive in some deep cellar under mounds of flaming and contaminated rubble," Churchill reflected, "there will be nothing left to do but to take a pill to end it all."

The Soviets, he suspected, being far behind the US in nuclear mega-tonnage, would behave cautiously. And if the UK were to stand a chance of restraining the US, he felt, it needed to be respected as an ally. "Influence," Churchill maintained, "depended on possession of force," especially thermonuclear force.

Genocidal H-bomb

To Churchill's regret, a summit never materialised before he retired as prime minister in April 1955. By then, however, he had concluded that nuclear arms, especially the genocidal H-bomb, were a potentially stabilising element in world affairs, and this took some of the edge off his disappointment.

The "annihilating character of these agencies may bring an utterly unforeseeable security to mankind", he predicted. If the nuclear arsenals of the superpowers could be balanced, then by a "sublime irony… safety will be the sturdy child of terror, and survival the twin brother of annihilation".

A good decade before the phrase Mutually Assured Destruction entered the Cold War vocabulary, Churchill was displaying distinct signs of MAD-ness.

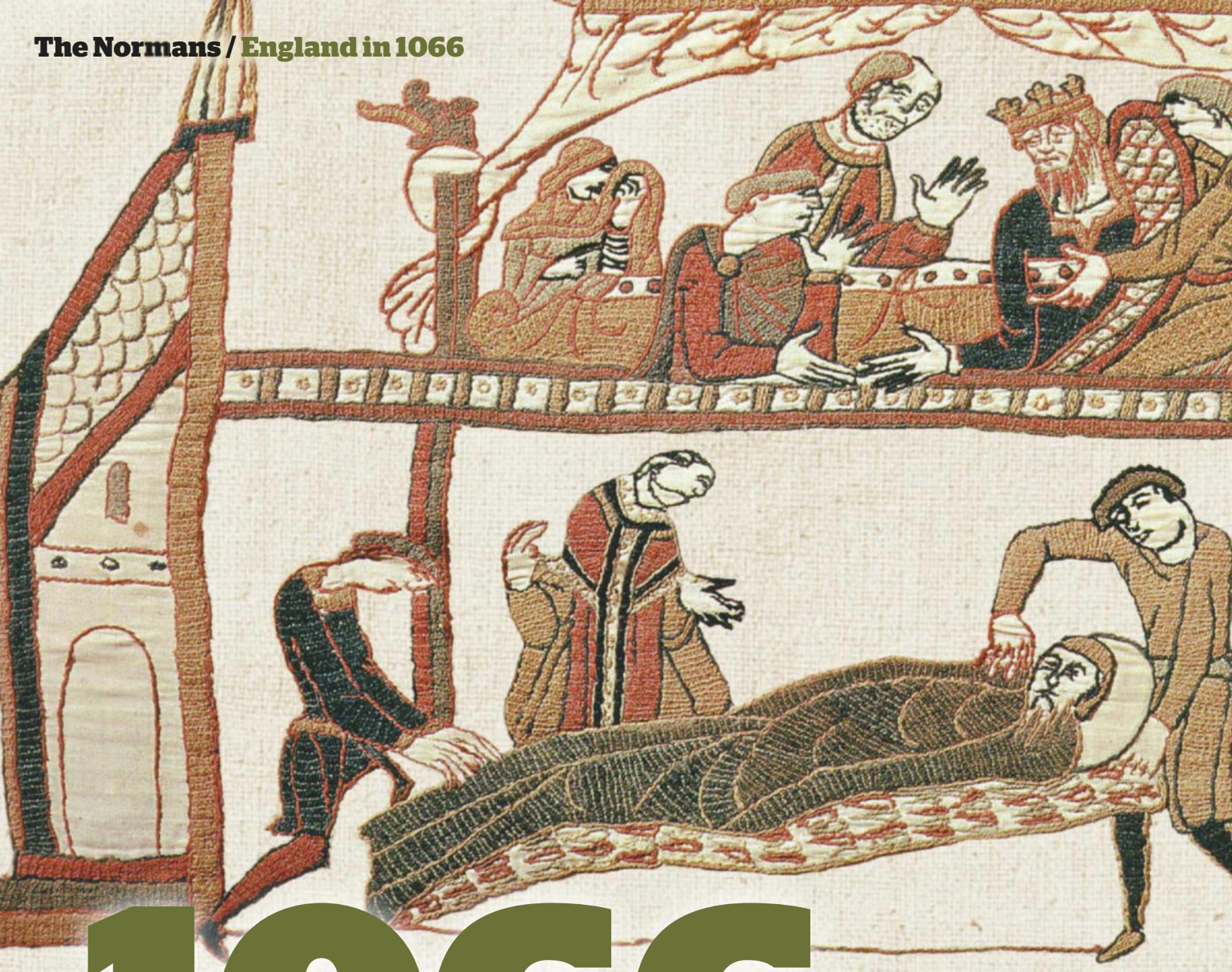
Churchill's approach to nuclear weapons evolved over 15 years of war and then Cold War. In the process, he proved to be a shape-shifter. Does it diminish Churchill the thermonuclear peacemaker of the 1950s that he had once been a would-be atomic warrior? Hardly. It confirms instead his remarkable capacity to adapt and learn, and shows that even in old age he was capable of visionary thinking on the great life-and-death issue of the postwar age. H

Kevin Ruane is professor of modern history at Canterbury Christ Church University

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **Churchill and the Bomb in War and Cold War** by Kevin Ruane (Bloomsbury, 2016)



1066 EIGHT THAT ROCKED ENG

In the 12 months after the death of King Edward the Confessor, England became a battleground contested by Anglo-Saxon, Norse and Norman rivals. **Alex Burghart** outlines the key flash points in a turbulent year of invasions

Complements the BBC Two series *1066*, due to air soon BBC TWO



T DAYS
GLAND

The death of King Edward the Confessor is depicted in the Bayeux tapestry. Edward died childless, creating the succession crisis that ravaged England
RIGHT: **Harold Godwinson is crowned king the day after Edward's death**

1 The Confessor's death brings chaos 5 JANUARY 1066

The most tumultuous year in the history of England began with the death of the old regime. On 5 January 1066 Edward the Confessor – a direct descendant of Alfred the Great (died 899), whose family had forged the kingdom of England in the 10th century – died heirless at the age of 62 after a 24-year reign. He was buried the following day in the church of St Peter's, Westminster, built by his order on the banks of the Thames, and which had been consecrated only the week before.

Edward's death opened the doors to chaos, with two major claimants vying for the English throne. The first, Harold Godwinson, was Earl of Wessex, brother of Edward's wife, Edith, and the wealthiest man in England after the king. The other was William, Duke of Normandy, Edward's cousin through his mother and one of the most formidable warriors in northern Europe. Both sides claimed that the late king had promised them the throne. Both may have been telling the truth – or both may have been lying.

Kings of England could not just promise the crown to whomsoever they pleased. Since the early ninth century, royal power had customarily passed from father first to the el r sons and then to the younger ones. There was one true-born successor to Edward's title. He was Edgar Ætheling – the grandson of Edward's half brother, Edmund Ironside. But circumstances were about to conspire against him.

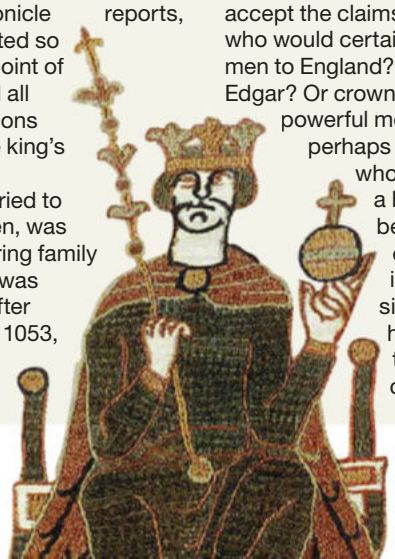
2 Harold's power proves decisive 6 JANUARY 1066

Edgar Ætheling was perhaps 14 years old when Edward the Confessor died. Young though this was, some previous kings had been younger. So it may be that the crowning of Earl Harold on 6 January, the day of Edward's funeral, was nothing less than the successful completion of a coup d'état.

The man who was now king had spent his life in close proximity to the throne. Harold's father, Godwin, Earl of Wessex, had apparently grown powerful while Cnut of Denmark was king of England (1016–35), acquiring an earldom and many plum (formerly royal) manors. After Edward the Confessor succeeded in 1042, Godwin's power grew further. As the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle reports, Godwin was "exalted so high, even to the point of ruling the king and all England, and his sons were earls and the king's favourites and his daughter was married to the king". This, then, was the uniquely glittering family into which Harold was born and which, after Godwin's death in 1053, he was to lead.

In the early 1060s Harold proved himself an able general, repeatedly defeating the forces of the Welsh king Gruffydd ap Llywelyn until the latter was assassinated and his head sent to Harold. Harold was well travelled, having visited Rome, Flanders, Germany and Normandy where, according to later Norman historians, he is said to have fought valiantly in a campaign against the Bretons and pledged to support William's claim to the English throne.

Wealthy, talented and well connected, Harold was perfectly positioned for a leading role in public life, and the death of the childless Edward placed the English nobility in a difficult position. Should they accept the claims of a foreign duke, who would certainly bring his own men to England? Look to the boy Edgar? Or crown one of the most powerful men in England – perhaps one of the few who had actually fought a battle (there had been very few engagements involving the English since 1016)? It may have seemed that there was really no choice to be made.



ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

3 Hardrada unleashes his great Viking army

c10 SEPTEMBER 1066

As well as Harold and William, there was a third man contesting the kingdom of England – one famous across Europe for his military prowess. Harald Hardrada, king of Norway, had cut his teeth captaining the Byzantine emperor's Varangian Guard (a special division of Russians and Vikings) and had amassed huge wealth and a reputation for violence. On returning home he captured and consolidated the Norwegian kingdom, and pursued a claim against Denmark. Harald reasoned that, as the heir to previous Danish kings, he also had a right to the English throne – though Scandinavian claims to England had, for the previous 200 years, been derived more from might than right.

Harald's fleet of perhaps 300 ships (according to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle) sailed first to Shetland and Orkney where they garnered reinforcements before reaching the mouth of the Tyne around 10 September. There he was met by Tostig, Harold Godwinson's errant younger brother, who joined forces with him. Tostig had been evicted from his earldom of Northumbria the previous year, since when he had been looking for ways to cause trouble. In the summer he had raided the Isle of Wight, Kent and Lincolnshire before being chased into Scotland. Indeed, he may have incited Hardrada to invade England in order to oust his rival sibling. So it was that, as autumn began, at the mouth of the Tyne, the last great Viking assault on England got under way.



A stained-glass portrait of Harald Hardrada from a church on Orkney

4 First blood to the Vikings

20 SEPTEMBER 1066

The forgotten battle of 1066 at Fulford, near York, saw Harald Hardrada's forces engage and defeat the Anglo-Saxon armies of Mercia and Northumbria. Precious little is known about Fulford and, consequently, its importance has often been downplayed, but it is likely to have played a huge role in the year's events. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "Earl Edwin [of Mercia] and Earl Morcar [of Northumbria] assembled from their earldom as large a force as they could muster, and fought against the invaders and caused them heavy casualties and many of the English host were killed, and drowned and put to flight, and the Norwegians remained masters of the field."

If the Anglo-Saxon levies of the Midlands and the north were routed, it meant that the force subsequently available to King Harold was much smaller than it might otherwise have been. But as Harald Hardrada's army is unlikely to have escaped unscathed, his ultimate fate may have been determined by the losses he sustained at Fulford.



Harald Hardrada wields an axe in a 13th-century depiction of his final battle

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5 Hardrada is cut down

25 SEPTEMBER 1066

Less than a week after the battle of Fulford, King Harold caught Harald and Tostig off guard at Stamford Bridge, Yorkshire. Later storytellers claimed that before the battle a horseman from Harold approached the Norwegian lines to offer Tostig: "peace and the whole of Northumbria" if he would leave Hardrada and join him. "And what," Tostig asked, "will he offer King Harald?" "Seven feet of English soil," came the reply.

The only vaguely detailed account of the fighting we have comes from the legendary Hardrada's Saga, written in the 13th century, which states that there were three phases to the battle. First, the English cavalry circled the Norwegian spearmen, charging them and being driven off, until Hardrada led his men into the fray, fighting in a rage before he was shot through the windpipe with an arrow, after which Tostig took up the Norwegian royal banner. There was a pause in the fighting as Harold again offered his brother peace – and again it was declined.

Finally, Hardrada's brother-in-law, Eystein Orre, reinforced the Norwegian army and rallied them – an engagement remembered as 'Orre's Storm' – before they were cut down. By night, "numberless men with them both Norwegians and English" had perished. Harold's English army had succeeded in ending the career of one of Europe's most formidable opponents – though perhaps at fatal cost to Harold's own forces.



We'll never know whether Harold was slain by an arrow to the eye – as depicted above in the Bayeux tapestry – but there can be little doubt that his death was a decisive moment in the battle of Hastings

DÉTAIL TAPISSERIE DE BAYEUX © VILLE DE BAYEUX

6 Harold marches to his doom

14 OCTOBER 1066

William of Normandy landed at Pevensey in Sussex on 28 September, just three days after Harold's victory over Hardrada in the north. William appears to have chosen a base from which he could cause terrible harm to some of Harold's own estates, thereby luring the king into combat. For his part, Harold seems to have made a terrible error in force-marching his recently bloodied troops south to fight another battle; perhaps, having defeated Hardrada, overconfidence got the better of him.

A number of extraordinary stories surround the battle of Hastings (actually fought at nearby Senlac Hill) in early accounts, most notably that of the duke's chaplain, William of Poitiers, written around 1077. We're told that, to counter rumours of his death during the battle, Duke William rode along his frontline with his helmet up to reassure his troops. It's also been claimed that the Norman forces tricked the English into charging down from their strategic hilltop position by feigning retreat before turning and charging them. Then there's the belief that Harold was felled by an arrow in his eye.

It would be wonderful to know that such stories were true. But, as Dr George Garnett has pointed out, many of the supposed details of the battle are actually taken from Julius Caesar's accounts of his campaigns (particularly the invasion of Britain) and Vegetius's famous ancient manual on warfare, *De Re Militari*. William of Poitiers had dramatised his master's victory – so much so that we cannot now tell how much is fiction and how much fact.

An earlier – albeit considerably shorter – account, written by William of Jumièges around 1071, is almost entirely different. According to this version of events, Harold rode all night, reaching the battlefield early in the morning. "At first light, having disposed his troops in three lines of battle, [William] advanced undaunted against the terrible enemy. The battle began at the third hour of day, and continued amid a welter of carnage and slaughter until nightfall. Harold himself, fighting amid the front rank of his army, fell covered with deadly wounds. And the English, seeing their king dead, lost confidence in their own safety, and as night was approaching they turned and fled."

Whatever the precise details, the basic facts remain: Harold was killed and the Normans won. The monks of Waltham, Harold's family abbey, later said that Harold's body was so disfigured that his mistress, Edith Swannesha ('gentle swan'), was asked to identify it by "certain marks, known only to her". In penance William later built Battle Abbey on Senlac Hill, its high altar supposedly erected on the spot where Harold died.

7 Desperate English leaders turn to Edgar Ætheling

LATE 1066

The man – or, rather, boy – who should have inherited from Edward the Confessor was Edgar Ætheling ('royal prince'). He was the grandson of Edmund II, known as 'Ironside', who had briefly inherited the kingdom from Æthelred the Unready. After Ironside was finally defeated by the Danish king Cnut in 1016, his son Edward Ætheling fled to Hungary in an attempt to evade capture by Cnut's allies, and Edgar was probably born there. Edward returned to England in 1057 but died almost immediately.

When Edward the Confessor died, Ætheling's claim to the throne was trumped by Harold's greater number of supporters, his large swathes of land and his vast wealth. However, in late 1066, with Harold dead, some thought Edgar their best bet.

On an unknown date after Hastings, archbishop Ealdred of York and the citizens of London chose him to be king "as was his proper due by birth", as the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle put it. The earls of Mercia and Northumbria, Edwin and Morcar, "promised that they would fight on his side," said the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "but always the more it ought to have been forward the more it got behind". Without the full support of these key nobles it was only a matter of time before Edgar would have to submit to the Conqueror. He did so at Berkhamsted in December 1066.



Edgar Ætheling, depicted in a 13th-century genealogical chronicle of English kings



Duke William of Normandy is crowned king of England in an illustration from Matthew Paris's chronicle *Flores Historiarum,* originally produced around 1252

8 William's triumph is complete

25 DECEMBER

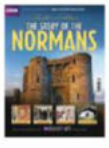
With all other claimants now truly defeated, William entered London in triumph. He was crowned in Westminster Abbey on Christmas Day – the date, no doubt, chosen to echo the imperial coronation of Charlemagne in Rome in 800. The service emphasised that William was Edward the Confessor's designated and rightful heir – as was his claim and wish. Legend has it that the day did not run smoothly. During the crowning ceremony the congregation was required to shout their acclamation of the new king – a noise reputedly taken by the Norman guards outside the abbey to indicate foul play within, leading them to burn local houses. William's reign had started as it would continue – with brutality.

Alex Burghart is a historian specialising in the Anglo-Saxon period. He previously lectured at King's College London

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Norman cavalry charge English footsoldiers during the battle of Hastings, in a scene from the Bayeux tapestry. The use of horse-mounted attacks, instead of traditional English 'shield-wall' formation, was just one change resulting from the Conquest

ALAMY

WHAT THE NORMANS DID FOR US

Duke William's defeat of Harold II at the battle of Hastings led to a seismic shift in English society, starting from the very top

By Marc Morris

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY

Even 950 years after the battle of Hastings, 1066 remains the most famous date in English history. It invariably marks the start or end of books about the Middle Ages, and even serves as a shorthand for English history as a whole, as in the parody book *1066 and All That*. But why does this date enjoy such unrivalled celebrity? Hastings was certainly a decisive battle, and is imprinted firmly in our collective consciousness from an early age thanks to the miraculous survival of the Bayeux tapestry. Yet those who part with their money this year in exchange for a commemorative mug, tie or tea towel showing Norman knights charging into English soldiers, or Harold being struck in the eye with an arrow, may still be left wondering what all the fuss is about. It is, after all, just one medieval battle among many.

The answer is simply that Hastings, and the Norman conquest that followed, affected England more than any other event – more so than the Reformation, more even than the Civil War of the 17th century. To quote the historian George Garnett, 1066 ushered in "change of a magnitude and at a speed unparalleled in English history".

The fundamental reason for this was the devastation of England's old ruling class. Prior to 1066, the country had been governed by earls, ealdormen and thegns whose roots, in most cases, stretched back into the distant past. The short-lived Danish conquest of 1015 had shaken up this aristocracy and brought new families to the fore, but they remained overwhelmingly English in their ancestry and attitudes.

Initially William had planned to keep these people in place. Though some had fallen at Hastings – notably Harold's brothers and supporters – there were still many Anglo-Saxon faces at the new king's court during the early years of his reign, as attestations to his charters testify.

But those early years were also marked by constant English rebellion matched by violent Norman repression. Notoriously, after a large rebellion in 1069, William laid waste to the whole of northern England, causing widespread famine and a death toll in excess of 100,000: the so-called 'Harrying of the North'. Terrible as this was, it was only a small fraction of the country's population of around 2 million.

The damage to the aristocracy was, by contrast, much more comprehensive. By the time the data for Domesday Book was compiled in 1086, the elite had been almost completely wiped out: of the 500 or so top individuals listed in the survey as tenants of the king, only 13 had English names, and of 7,000 or so subtenants, no more than 10 per cent were natives. The aristocracy of Anglo-Saxon England had been almost completely swept away – killed in battle, driven into exile or forced to exist in suppressed circumstances.



A copy of Domesday Book. The Conqueror's great survey provides evidence of the demise of the Anglo-Saxon aristocracy

BRIDGEMAN

In their place was a new ruling class drawn from the continent. "England," lamented the chronicler William of Malmesbury in the early 12th century, "has become the dwelling place of foreigners and the playground of lords of alien blood. No Englishman today is an earl, a bishop or an abbot; new faces everywhere enjoy England's riches and gnaw at her vitals."

The replacement of one ruling class with another had profound consequences for the country. English and Normans were quite different peoples who not only spoke different languages but also had quite different ideas about the way society should be governed. To begin with an obvious, practical example, they had different modes and methods of warfare. As the battle of Hastings demonstrated, the English elite still preferred to fight on foot, drawing their armies up to form their famous 'shield-wall', whereas the Norman aristocracy preferred to ride into battle after the fashion of their Frankish neighbours. More important than such cavalry tactics was the introduction of castles. These newfangled fortifications had been sprouting up across western Europe since the turn of the second millennium but, apart from a handful built during the reign of Edward the Confessor, had not been seen in England.

All that changed with the coming of the Normans. "They built castles far and wide throughout the land," wept the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle in 1066, "oppressing the unhappy people." At a conservative estimate, some 500 had been established in England and Wales before 1100, most of them planted in the years immediately after the invasion as the first generation of settlers dug themselves in. Think of almost any famous medieval English fortress – Windsor or Winchester, Newcastle or Norwich, Rochester, Lincoln or York – and the chances are it originated during the reign of William the Conqueror.

Though most of these sites were built to a motte-and-bailey design with wooden walls and buildings, some incorporated great stone towers. Those built by the Conqueror at London and Colchester, and by his greatest followers at places such as Richmond and Chepstow, were on a scale never before seen in Britain.



ALAMY

Durham Cathedral's magnificent nave, which was completed in the early 12th century. It was in the construction of 15 new cathedrals that the scale of the Norman architectural revolution in England was most apparent

THE **HISTORY** ESSAY

Until 1066, the norm had been to deal with political rivals by killing them. But, once his opponents had surrendered, William imprisoned them or sent them into exile. Occasionally, he even freed them

Not even the Romans, whose imperial style the king and his courtiers strove to imitate, had built towers of such height in Britain.

The scale of the architectural revolution was even more apparent in the rebuilding of churches. In 1066 England had only one Romanesque church: Edward the Confessor's abbey at Westminster. Thereafter England's new continental prelates competed with each other in a frenzy of grandiose reconstruction, ripping down and replacing what they considered to be outmoded places of worship. By the time of William's death in 1087, work was well advanced on nine of England's 15 cathedrals, and by the time of the death of his son, Henry I, in 1135, all 15 had been completely rebuilt. As with the castle towers, the scale was unprecedented – the new cathedral at Winchester, begun in 1079, was larger than any other church north of the Alps – and the speed was astonishing. This was the single greatest revolution in the history of English ecclesiastical architecture.

Striking as these changes were, arguably the most profound and lasting consequences of the Conquest arose because the Normans had new attitudes towards human life itself. You will still often read that they introduced feudalism to England – a statement that most medievalists today would regard as meaningless, because the term was invented in the 19th century, and no two historians can agree on the definition. The Normans do seem to have introduced a more precisely defined form of military service, and they certainly introduced to many parts of England a more onerous form of lordship. Domesday Book shows in many counties a huge drop in the number of people classed as free. In Bedfordshire, for example, there were 700 freemen in 1066, but by 1086 their number had fallen to just 90. A famous Domesday entry for Marsh Gibbon in Buckinghamshire notes that its English farmer, Æthelric, used to hold his land freely, but now holds it "in heaviness and misery".

Yet, even as they were making life more miserable for those who had once been free, the Normans were dramatically improving the fortunes of those who had not. Before 1066, England had been a slave-owning and slave-trading society. To modern minds the distinction between a pre-Conquest slave and a post-Conquest serf may seem negligible, but to those who experienced both conditions there was a world of difference: to be a slave was far worse than being a servile peasant.

Slaves were essentially human chattels, with no more status than the beasts that stood in the field. They could be sold individually, separated from their families, punished by beating, and even killed by their masters if deemed to have transgressed: male slaves were stoned, females burned. And their numbers were far from negligible. Estimates vary, but at least 10 per cent of the population of England were slaves in 1066, with some scholars suggesting the figure may have been as high as 30 per cent.

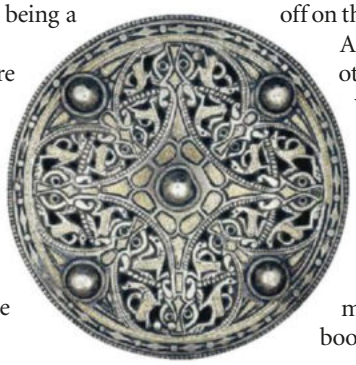
In contemporary Normandy, by contrast, slavery was a thing of the past. The Normans, as the descendants of Vikings, had once been slave-traders par excellence; the Norman capital, Rouen, had once had a thriving international slave market. But references to this market dry up in the early 11th century, as does evidence for slavery in the duchy as whole. By the time William became duke in 1035, some Normans – particularly churchmen – were actively condemning it.

Accordingly, slavery declined sharply in England after the Conquest. Domesday Book shows , for example, a 25 per cent drop in slave numbers in Essex between 1066 and 1086. The chroniclers also tell us that William banned the slave trade, acting at the insistence of his long-term moral tutor, Lanfranc of Bec, who was made archbishop of Canterbury after the Conquest. The ban was clearly effective because in the following decades slavery died out. The last church council to condemn "that shameful trade by which in England people used to be sold like animals" took place in 1102, and by the early 12th century the practice of keeping and trading slaves seems to have disappeared altogether. "In this respect," wrote the monastic author Lawrence of Durham in the 1130s, "the English found foreigners treated them better than they had treated themselves."

This better treatment was also apparent in another respect, which can be summarised in a single word: chivalry. In the 11th century, chivalry had nothing to do with later perversions such as laying cloaks in puddles for ladies, or inviting the enemy to take the first shot. It meant, essentially, not killing your enemies once they had been defeated. The Conqueror may have been savage in his warfare but once his political opponents had surrendered he either imprisoned them or sent them into exile. Occasionally he even let them go free in return for a promise of future fidelity.

This was all foreign to England, where the norm till 1066 had been to deal with political rivals by killing them. Æthelred the Unready (c968–1016) had succeeded to the English throne after the murder of his half-brother, Edward the Martyr, and later eliminated several of his enemies in similar fashion. His successor King Cnut began his reign in 1016 with a bloody purge of the English aristocracy. Even during the reign of the saintly Edward the Confessor it was possible to get away with murder, as the Northumbrian nobles who came to spend Christmas 1064 at court discovered when they were bumped off on the queen's orders.

All this changed after 1066. "No man dared slay another," said the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, "no matter what evil he might have done him." During the Conqueror's reign, only one high-ranking Englishman, Earl Waltheof of Northumbria, was executed, and he was said to have been judged according to "the laws of the English". Waltheof, beheaded outside Winchester in 1076, was the last earl to be executed in England till 1306. From 1066, executions of noblemen were exceedingly rare, and chivalry became a taboo that you broke at your peril, as the murderous King



The ninth-century Strickland Brooch. Much fine Anglo-Saxon silverwork was lost after the Conquest

© THE BRITISH MUSEUM



An 11th-century Anglo-Saxon illustration shows men threshing corn. "Before 1066, England had been a slave-owning and slave-trading society," says Marc Morris. But, within a few years, we're told that William I had ordered the practice to be banned

BRIDGEMAN

John later discovered. The Norman conquest, in other words, ushered in almost two and half centuries of chivalrous restraint.

The sudden replacement of one ruling elite with another meant that these new attitudes towards slavery and political killing were adopted rapidly in England. Beyond England's borders, however, no such revolution had taken place, with profound consequences for the history of the British Isles. By the 1120s, English chroniclers such as William of Malmesbury were looking at their Welsh, Scottish and Irish neighbours with a fresh and critical eye, noting with distaste that they continued to slaughter and enslave each other. Such people were considered barbarians – the first time this distinction had been drawn in British politics. New attitudes imported by the Normans created for the English a sense of moral superiority over the Celtic peoples, which would help to justify and underpin their own aggressive colonial enterprises against those peoples in the centuries that followed.

None of this is intended as a defence of the Norman conquest. The price of such change was immeasurable pain for many English people. One effect much lamented at the time was the loss of artistic treasures. Anglo-Saxon craftsmen were famous for their skill in working precious metals, yet almost all the artefacts they created were either carried off as booty or melted down to pay mercenaries. And while we may admire the post-1066 Romanesque churches, those destroyed to make way for the new ones had in many cases stood for centuries. "We wretches are destroying the work of the saints," wept Bishop Wulfstan of Worcester in 1084, as he watched the roof being ripped from his old cathedral, "thinking in our insolent pride we are improving them."

Though the effect of the Conquest on the English language is nowadays seen as a positive, with Old English enriched by thousands of French loan words, few English people at the time can have viewed it in such benign terms. For at least two centuries before 1066, since the days of King Alfred, English had been used not only for writing religious texts but also for drawing up government documents. Shortly after the Conquest, however, the royal chancery switched to Latin, and in time so did the scriptoria of monastic houses, severing a vital link between the clergy and the laity. "Now that teaching is forsaken, and the folk are lost," wrote an anonymous English author in the mid-12th century, "now there is another people that teaches our folk."

Lastly, the Norman takeover entailed an enormous loss of life: the thousands who fell at Hastings were only the beginning. Some English observers, looking back several generations later, could see the positive changes brought by the Normans, but for those who lived through the experience, the Conquest felt like their world coming to an end. "Things went always from bad to worse," sighed the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle for 1066. "When God wills may the end be good." ■

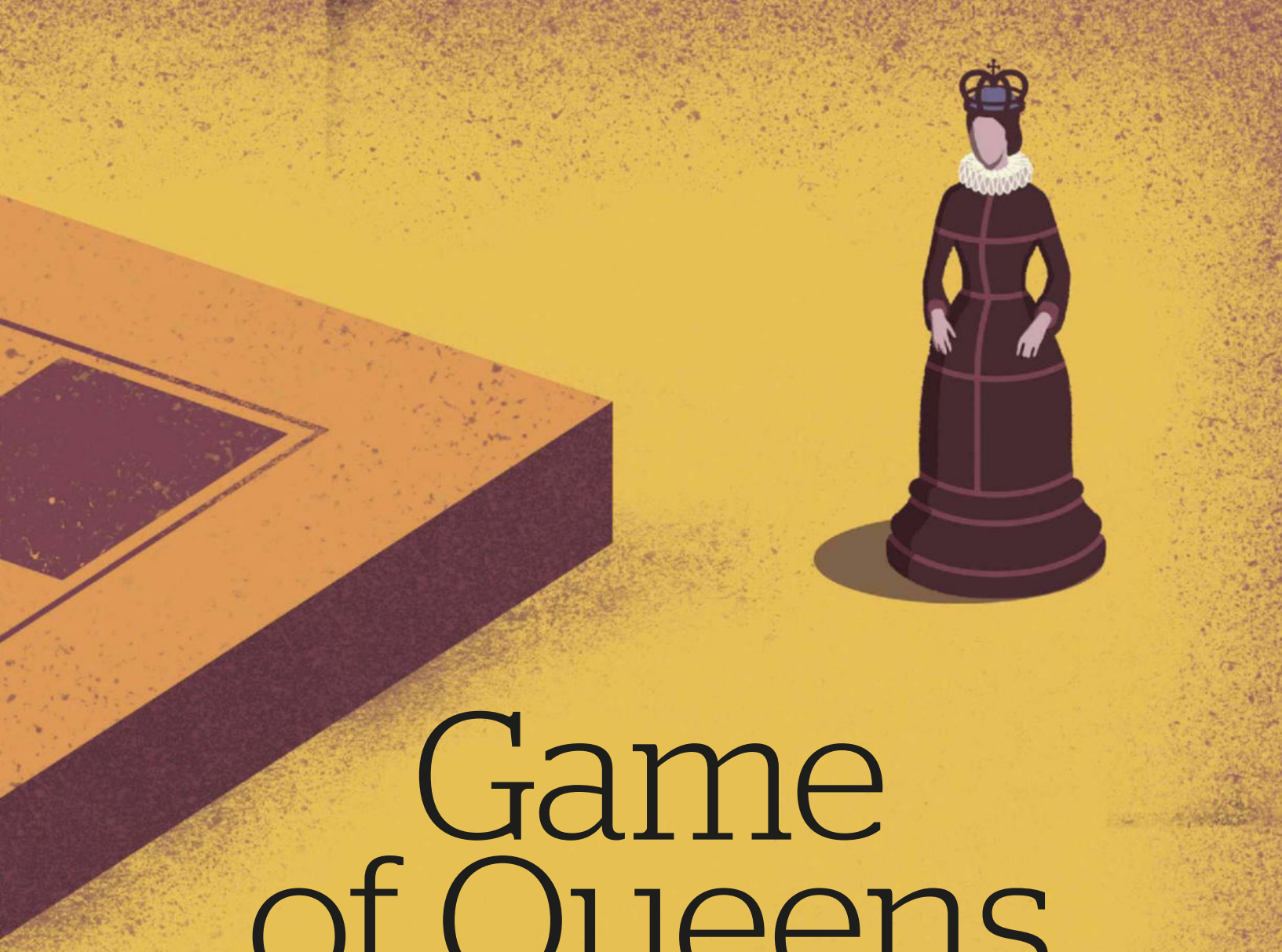
Marc Morris is the author of *The Norman Conquest* (Windmill, 2013). He will be speaking at both our Winchester and York History Weekends (*historyweekend.com*)

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **William I: England's Conqueror** by Marc Morris (Penguin, 2016)





Game of Queens

For more than 100 years from the late 15th century, women came to hold positions of power in Europe. **Sarah Gristwood** traces the intricate network of interrelated queens and regents

ILLUSTRATION BY DAVIDE BONAZZI

After her accession ceremony on 13 December 1474, Isabella of Castile rode through the streets of Segovia – behind a horseman holding a naked sword. Even her husband, Ferdinand of Aragon, was shocked, protesting that he had never before heard of a queen "who usurped this masculine attribute". But Isabella's reign ushered in an explosion of female rule, unequalled until our own day. In the 16th century, England, Scotland, France, the Netherlands, Spain, Portugal and Hungary all came at one time or another to be controlled by a woman, whether as regent or queen regnant.

These rulers were linked by a complex web of mothers and daughters, mentors and proteges. Lessons were passed from Isabella of Castile to her daughter Catherine of Aragon and thence Mary I, and from the French regent Anne de Beaujeu to Louise of Savoy, through Louise's daughter Marguerite of Navarre to *her* daughter Jeanne d'Albret, to Marguerite's admirer Anne Boleyn and thus to Elizabeth I.

Their experiences are echoed today. Headlines about Angela Merkel, Theresa May, Nicola Sturgeon and Hillary Clinton emphasise a powerful woman's looks and likeability; the problem of gendered abuse, of seeming tough enough for high office without being dubbed unfeminine; the question of whether female leaders will relate to each other, and exercise their power, in a specifically female way.

The age of queens did not outlast the 16th century. Women had found themselves at the forefront of the great religious divides that tore Europe apart, but those divisions meant that, though Anne Boleyn could be educated in two foreign countries, her daughter Elizabeth never set foot out of her own land.

Overleaf we introduce 10 key female figures who dominated 16th-century Europe, and explore the relationships that linked them.

Sarah Gristwood is the author of *Game of Queens: The Women Who Made Sixteenth-Century Europe* (Oneworld, 2016)

The power grid

A web of family and influence linked top noblewomen

Isabella I of Castile (1451–1504)

Before she even took the throne, Isabella broke with tradition by arranging her own **marriage to Ferdinand of Aragon, uniting the two main Spanish kingdoms.** They ruled together as the mighty Catholic Monarchs, famous for their expulsion of the Moors and Jews, for establishing the Inquisition in Spain, and for their sponsorship of Christopher Columbus. Ferdinand and Isabella produced only one short-lived son but several influential daughters – among them Catherine of Aragon who in 1509 married England's king Henry VIII.



DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

PROTEGE



Margaret of Austria (1480–1530)

The child of Mary of Burgundy (ruling duchess of what would later be known as the Netherlands) and future Holy Roman Emperor Maximilian, Margaret was, while still a toddler, contracted to the French king-to-be Charles VIII. When that alliance fell through she married Juan, heir of Isabella and Ferdinand, and then, after his early death, the Duke of Savoy. After he died she returned to the Netherlands where for many years **she ruled as regent on behalf of her nephew, the future emperor Charles V.** She raised four of his sisters, all of whom became queens consort – of France, Portugal, Denmark and Hungary. Mary of Hungary succeeded her aunt as regent of the Netherlands and raised another generation of influential nieces. Though Margaret of Austria never bore a living child, she has been called the *Grand Mère* – 'Great Mother' – of Europe.

DAUGHTER

SISTERS-IN-LAW

PROTEGE

Catherine of Aragon (1485–1536)

Catherine was defined by Spanish heritage. **Henry VII of England sought the valuable Spanish alliance** by wedding her to his eldest son, Arthur; after Arthur's early death she married his younger brother, Henry VIII. As regent in 1513, "in imitation of her mother Isabella", she rallied English troops to resist a Scottish assault. But as daughter to a successful queen regnant she was poorly placed to understand her husband's obsessive desire for a son. When her marriage was rent by Henry's infatuation with her former protege Anne Boleyn, Catherine still, after almost 30 years in England, described herself as a stranger in the land, appealing for help to her former sister-in-law Margaret of Austria.



PROTEGE

Anne Boleyn (c1501–36)

In 1513 Anne came to the court of Margaret of Austria as one of her maids, before spending seven years at the French court. **This continental education gave her a glamour that made her a star when she returned to England.** But it also gave her the opportunity to witness the religious reforms promoted by Marguerite of Navarre, and to see women exercising power in a way still unfamiliar in England. Before her marriage to Henry, Anne – as an active promoter of French interests – was seen as a useful alternative to the Habsburg Catherine. But a few years later, when a Habsburg alliance was desirable, that French identification contributed to her fall.



DAUGHTER

DAUGHTER

STEPDAUGHTER

Mary I (1516–58)

Catherine of Aragon inculcated in her daughter Mary her own belief in the validity of her marriage to Henry VIII, and her own resolute Catholicism. "We never come unto the kingdom of Heaven but by troubles," she assured her daughter. **Mary's determined resistance to her father's religious reforms** was attributed to her "unbridled Spanish blood". She endured years of real hardship before, in 1553, the death of her younger brother Edward (and a passage of armed resistance reminiscent of her female forebears) brought her to the throne. Once on it, as observers noted, she always favoured Spain and promoted her mother's religion. She married Philip of Spain and her efforts to restore the Catholic faith, involving the persecution of Protestants, earned her the sobriquet 'Bloody Mary'.

HALF-SISTERS



GETTY IMAGES/BRIDGEMAN/ALAMY

Anne de Beaujeu
(aka Anne of France, 1461–1522)

Eldest daughter of the French king Louis XI, Anne was widely noted as a woman of great ability. The Salic Law, however, prohibited her from acceding to the throne. Instead, on Louis' death **she acted as regent in all but name during the minority of her younger brother Charles VIII**. Anne wrote an advice manual for noblewomen, *Enseignements [Lessons for my Daughter]* that has been compared to Machiavelli's *The Prince*. "When it comes to the government of their lands and affairs, [widows] must depend only on themselves; when it comes to sovereignty, they must not cede power to anyone," was one of her maxims. Anne was in charge of the upbringings of Margaret of Austria during her marriage to Charles VIII, and of Louise of Savoy.



CHILDHOOD FRIENDS

PROTEGE

Louise of Savoy (1476–1531)

Louise's status rose steadily as several French kings in succession died without heir until the closest in line to the throne was François, her son by the Count d'Angoulême. **After François I became king in 1515, Louise was widely regarded as the power behind his throne**. In 1529 she sat down with Margaret of Austria (her childhood playmate when they were both raised in Anne de Beaujeu's care) to negotiate the so-called 'Ladies' Peace' of Cambrai. Neither Louise's son François nor Margaret's nephew Charles could compromise their dignity by being the first to talk of reconciliation but, Margaret wrote: "How easy for ladies… to concur in some endeavours for warding off the general ruin of Christendom, and to make the first advance in such an undertaking!"

PROTEGE



Marguerite of Navarre
(aka Marguerite d'Angoulême, 1492–1549)

Louise of Savoy's daughter Marguerite was also in Cambrai when the 'Ladies' Peace' was negotiated. Louise, François and Marguerite were so close that they were known as 'the trinity'; neither of Marguerite's two marriages (to the Duc d'Alençon and to Henri II of Navarre) impeded her devotion to her brother, nor her sway over his court. Author of the book of short stories known as the *Heptaméron*, Marguerite was an intellectual leader among the great ladies who sought to reform the Catholic church. The number of ideas, books and contacts they had in common suggests that **Marguerite became a role model for Anne Boleyn** during the latter's years in France. Anne would later send word to Marguerite that her "greatest wish, next to having a son, was to see you again".

DAUGHTER

DAUGHTER



Jeanne d'Albret
(1528–72)

In 1555 Marguerite's daughter Jeanne inherited her father's Navarrese kingdom. Reared in her mother's reforming tradition, in 1560 she publicly converted to the Protestant faith. Joining France's Huguenot rebels inside the besieged fortress of La Rochelle, **she became a heroine of the Reformation**. When summoned to appear before the Inquisition, Jeanne was saved by the intervention of Catherine de Medici, even though the latter was on the other side of the religious divide. Catherine tried to promote religious tolerance, but the marriage of her daughter Marguerite to Jeanne's son Henri in 1572 provoked the slaughter of Huguenots known as the Bartholomew's Day Massacre (pictured below). "You cannot govern too wisely with kindness and diffidence," Anne de Beaujeu had said – the final bitter 'Lesson' with which her daughters were to end the century.



ALLIES



Elizabeth I (1533–1603)

Thanks in part to her long reign, Anne Boleyn's daughter is remembered by many as England's greatest monarch. She represents the apogee of an age of queens – which, however, was perhaps already waning before her death. **Elizabeth might be seen as exemplifying many of the maxims laid down for powerful women at the beginning of the 16th century** by the French regent Anne de Beaujeu (above). Elizabeth's motto was *Video et taceo* – I see but say nothing. "Have eyes to notice everything yet to see nothing, ears to hear everything yet to know nothing," Anne de Beaujeu had urged.

Elizabeth corresponded with Jeanne d'Albret, Catherine de Medici and the influential Ottoman consort Safiye. But the religious divisions of the Reformation denied her the easy contact with other women across the continent that had been enjoyed by earlier generations, and fostered her long rivalry with her Catholic kinswoman Mary, Queen of Scots.

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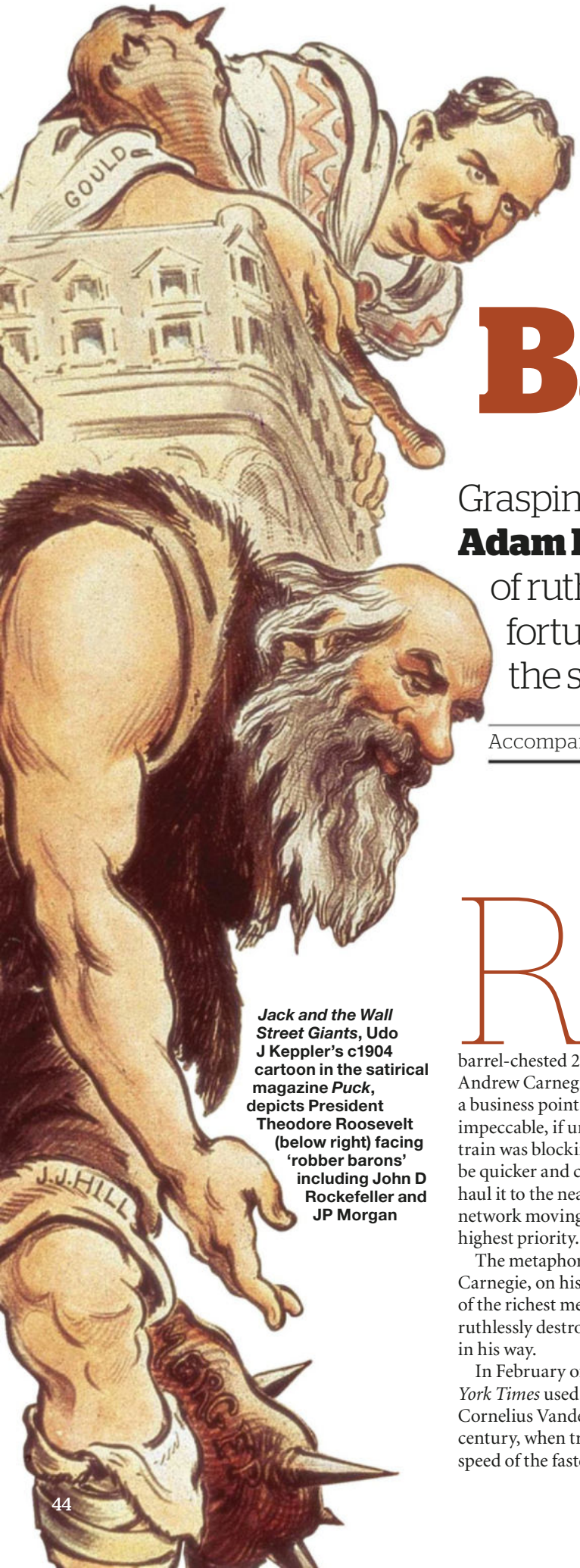
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Jack and the Wall Street Giants, Udo J Keppler's c1904 cartoon in the satirical magazine *Puck*, depicts President Theodore Roosevelt (below right) facing 'robber barons' including John D Rockefeller and JP Morgan

Rise of the Robber Barons

Grasping monopolists or American heroes? **Adam IP Smith** tells the story of a new breed of ruthless businessmen who made fortunes from oil, steel and railroads in the second half of the 19th century

Accompanies the new BBC Radio 4 series *The Robber Barons*

Railway bosses were not supposed to order their own freight cars to be burned. But in 1859, the superintendent of the western division of the Pennsylvania Railroad – a diminutive, barrel-chested 24-year-old Scotsman called Andrew Carnegie – did exactly that. From a business point of view, Carnegie's logic was impeccable, if unconventional: a derailed train was blocking the line, and it would be quicker and cheaper to destroy it than to haul it to the nearest depot. Keeping the network moving, Carnegie realised, was the highest priority.

The metaphor is irresistible: Andrew Carnegie, on his way to becoming one of the richest men the world has ever known, ruthlessly destroying anything that stood in his way.

In February of the same year, *The New York Times* used a sinister simile to attack Cornelius Vanderbilt – a man born in the 18th century, when travel times were limited to the speed of the fastest horse, but who went on to



dominate the early development of both steam ships and railroads.

To Carnegie's ambitious generation, the venerable Vanderbilt – or 'the Commodore', as he was known – was the man who showed what could be done if you disregarded old rules and made your own. In the 1850s, Vanderbilt was engaged in fierce competition to control the lucrative sea route to California via Central America. At one stage, his rivals paid him a subsidy in exchange for him suspending his line.

To the *Times*, though, Vanderbilt's behaviour was literally robbery. He resembled "those old German barons who, from their eyries along the Rhine, swooped down upon the commerce of the noble river and wrung tribute from every passenger that floated by". The label 'robber baron' was born in that angry editorial; 20 years later it was in wide circulation as withering shorthand for the handful of men who dominated business in what Mark Twain dubbed "the Gilded Age".

In the wake of the American Civil War, with the nation reunited on the back of the abolition of slavery, these so-called robber barons – generally identified as Vanderbilt, Carnegie, John D Rockefeller and a handful of other hard-nosed and hugely successful businessmen of that era – profited from one of the most profound revolutions in the human experience: the transition from a society in which most people were either self-employed or in some form of unfree labour, to one in which most worked for wages.

Bigger is better

One thing they all had in common was that they made their money from the relentless logic of the economies of scale. By driving out competition, controlling the supply and distribution chains, and keeping wages as low as possible, the robber barons ruthlessly cut costs. They forged their path in the business world at a time when new technologies – steel, oil refining, railroads and steam-powered factory technology – were remaking the material basis of the western world. They were the exploiters, not the inventors: men who took small-scale operations and scaled them up, and then up again.

Size was everything. As John D Rockefeller realised, one big oil refinery was vastly more efficient than 20 small ones. Similarly, as Jay Gould and Leland Stanford were to demonstrate, big railways with no competition could move more freight and charge higher rates than a bunch of small railroads competing for the same traffic.

The robber barons created the world's first large-scale corporations – impersonal organisations that, with the aid of bankers such as JP Morgan, could raise undreamed-of capital from financial markets. When Morgan bought Carnegie's steel business in 1901 he paid the equivalent of US$370bn in today's money. Rockefeller's Standard Oil totally dominated the world's production, refinement and distribution of oil. By 1890, railroads employed around 3 per cent of the entire national workforce, or 800,000 men – many times more than worked for the government or served in the armed forces.

The personification of these otherwise impersonal organisations, the robber barons were, among other things, literally cartoon characters. Their names and faces became familiar to millions through the pages of satirical illustrated magazines such as *Puck* in which the titans of industry were drawn as crooked hucksters carving up the country, or as obscene octopuses strangling the populace. The cartoons fed into a mass movement to defend the principle of government of, for and by the people against the monopolists who had stolen the American dream.

Ida Tarbell, a feisty journalist whose father's oil-producing business in western Pennsylvania had been ruined by Rockefeller, was the most acerbic of the critics. Tarbell and her millions of sympathetic readers were fighting, they thought, to defend the dying ideal of an egalitarian republic of small-scale farmers and artisans.

For others, however, the likes of Carnegie and Rockefeller were heroic entrepreneurs who were making America a steam-powered superpower. They were the real-life proof of the moral wisdom of those immensely popular Horatio Alger stories for young boys in which, in America, hard work always paid off and the poor could rise up.

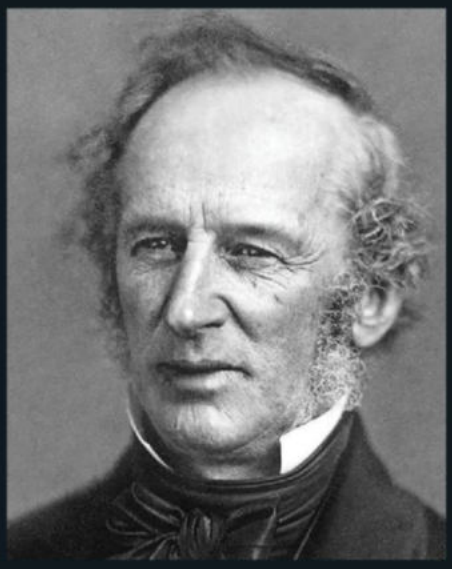
Critics and fans alike saw the robber barons, for good or ill, as the masters of this



According to the *Times*, Vanderbilt resembled **"those German barons** who, from their eyries along the Rhine, swooped down and **wrung tribute from every passenger"**

GETTY IMAGES

Three titans of big business



THE FIRST OF THE BARONS

Cornelius Vanderbilt

1794–1877

Wealth: At his death, Vanderbilt's fortune was estimated to be around US$100m which, as a share of US GDP at the time, makes him perhaps the second-wealthiest American in history, after only John D Rockefeller.

How he made his money: Shipping, then railroads. Vanderbilt began work as a ferryman in New York City harbour, soon working his way into a partnership with the operator of a state-of-the-art steamboat. By the 1850s he ran a transatlantic passenger line and was competing hard, using every trick in the book to dominate the lucrative transport route to California. (At that time by far the cheapest and quickest way to the goldfields was to take a ship from New York to Panama or Nicaragua, make an overland crossing from the east coast to the west, then embark again for the sea journey up the North American Pacific coast.) After 1860, Vanderbilt sold his shipping interests and invested in railroads instead. He spent the final 10 years of his life building up the New York Central, the principal route from New York City to Chicago.

How he spent it: Establishing one of his sons as his heir. Not one of the great philanthropists, he nevertheless endowed Vanderbilt University in Tennessee.

Legacy: Vanderbilt was the first of the so-called 'robber barons'.

THE TOUGH PHILANTHROPIST

Andrew Carnegie

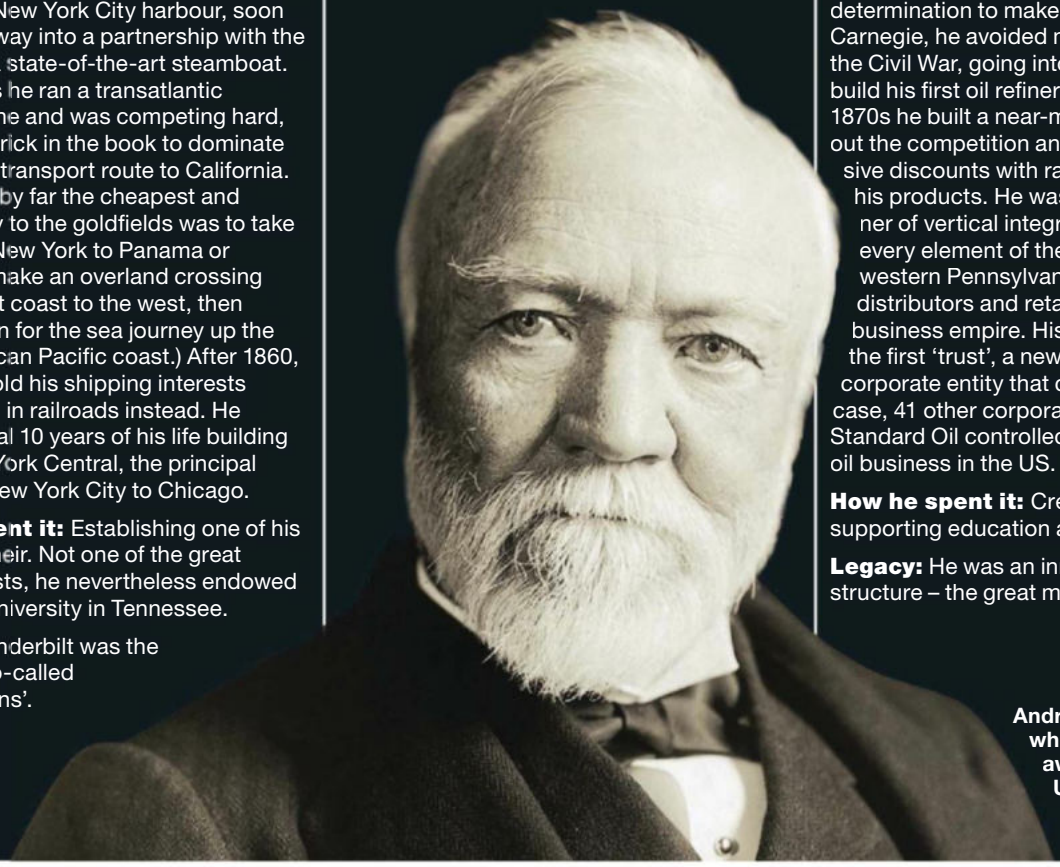
1835–1919

Wealth: He sold Carnegie Steel for US$480m – if calculated as a share of GDP today, at least US$370bn.

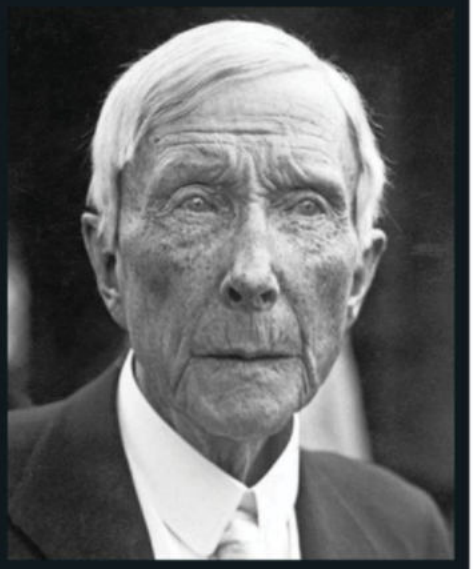
How he made his money: Steel. Carnegie was born in Fife into a family of struggling weavers who emigrated to western Pennsylvania in search of a better life when young Andrew was 13. He worked his way up from telegraph messenger boy to a senior position in the Pennsylvania Railroad, thanks to the patronage of railroad president Tom Scott. Avoiding service in the Civil War by paying for a substitute to fight in his place, Carnegie made his mark, and the basis of his fortune, by investing in steel companies. His innovation was to find ways of using new processes and technologies to produce steel more cheaply and in vastly greater quantities than ever before. Driving out competition and buying out all his suppliers, Carnegie's companies provided, among other things, the rails that crisscrossed America in the late 19th century.

How he spent it: He gave away 95 per cent of his fortune in his lifetime, endowing libraries, universities and concert halls, and campaigning for international peace.

Legacy: He was culpable for vicious labour relations, but was also a great philanthropist.



Andrew Carnegie, who latterly gave away some US$350m of his fortune



THE OIL BILLIONAIRE

John D Rockefeller

1839–1937

Wealth: The world's first dollar billionaire, his fortune at the time of his death was estimated to be around US$1.4bn, making him by far the richest man in the country, then or since.

How he made his money: Oil. The son of a bigamist father and a devout mother, from a young age Rockefeller had a steely determination to make money. Like Carnegie, he avoided military service in the Civil War, going into partnership to build his first oil refinery in 1863. In the 1870s he built a near-monopoly, squeezing out the competition and agreeing exclusive discounts with railroads to transport his products. He was a great practitioner of vertical integration, bringing every element of the supply train, from western Pennsylvania oil drillers to distributors and retailers, into his business empire. His Standard Oil was the first 'trust', a new kind of vast corporate entity that contained, in this case, 41 other corporations. At its height, Standard Oil controlled 95 per cent of the oil business in the US.

How he spent it: Creating foundations supporting education and science.

Legacy: He was an innovator in corporate structure – the great monopolist.

ALAMY/GETTY IMAGES

new world. But these men did not always see it that way at all. They were, by their own accounts, driven as much by anxiety as optimism. Neither Horatio Alger heroes nor Ida Tarbell villains, they saw themselves as the necessary instruments by which the economy could be managed.

Rockefeller and Carnegie claimed that they were motivated not by personal ambition but by public-spiritedness. The two were hardly soulmates (Carnegie got a kick out of giving an annual Christmas present of fine Scotch whisky to the teetotal Rockefeller) but they each developed a theory of capitalism according to which the vast organisations they built were the necessary means of managing the hellishly disruptive forces unleashed by industrialisation.

Their companies, they argued, reduced inefficiency and wasteful over-production. Where there was chaos, they brought order; where there was strife, they brought harmony. This was a breathtaking inversion of how many saw them, but it was repeated with conviction, and it drew on a coherent and, to them, self-evidently true narrative of their careers.

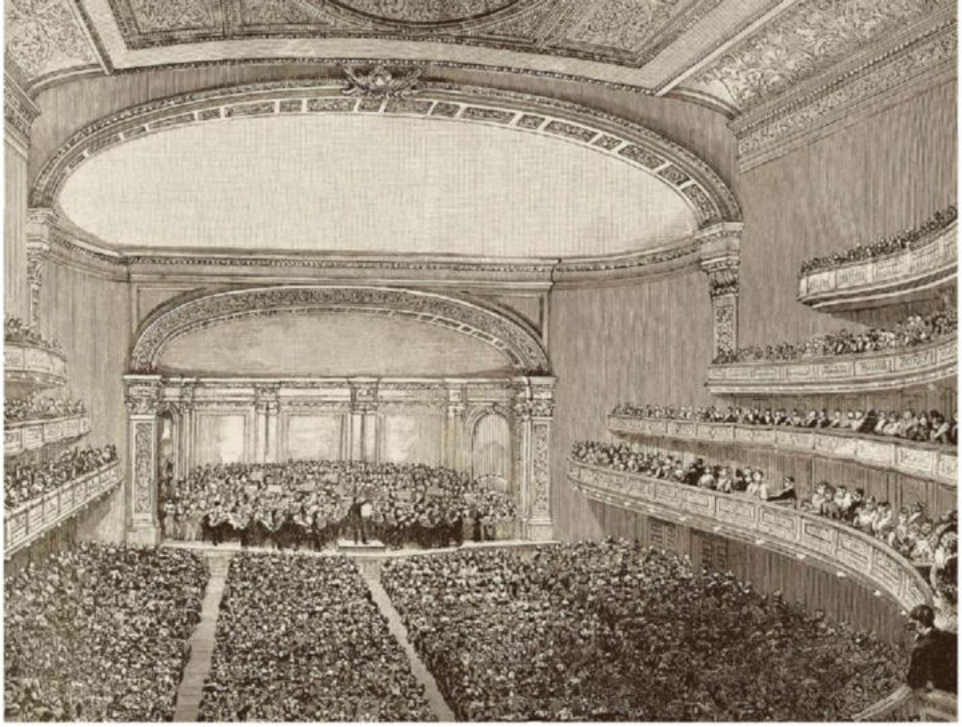
A prime example concerns how Rockefeller understood the crucial turning point in his business career. This occurred in the early 1870s, at a time of falling prices in the nascent oil-refining business, when he leveraged a freight deal with a railroad to compel his competitors in Cleveland to sell out to him. Charged with behaving aggressively and dishonestly, Rockefeller responded that his company was an "angel of mercy". Standard Oil, he later claimed, was "the Moses who delivered [his benighted competitors] from their folly which had wrought such havoc in their fortunes".

Carnegie adopted a similar business strate and, in essence, a similar rationale when he moved from railroads into steel, combining investment in new technologies with using every trick in the book to eliminate rivals.

The curse of bigness

At the heart of the problem – as their critics saw it – was the sheer scale of the robber barons' enterprises. It was 'the curse of bigness' that gave these men the giddying power they had. But the robber barons' riposte was that the new economy required central planning. "The day of combination is here to stay," Rockefeller assured an interviewer in the 1920s, as Europe experimented with different types of state planning. "Individualism is gone, never to return."

It was a sentiment echoed by New Deal planners when, in response to the Great Depression, they abandoned decades of anti-monopoly politics. In its place they sought ways of centrally managing a capitalist system in which no one imagined a return to 19th-century levels of growth.



New York's Carnegie Hall is packed to the rafters on its opening night in 1891. The world-famous concert hall was funded by the magnate who gave it its name, Andrew Carnegie

TOPFOTO

Carnegie had a **great desire for public adulation** and a huge determination to present himself as acting always in the public interest

Carnegie had a greater desire for public adulation than Rockefeller ever seemed to require, but a similar determination to present himself as acting always in the public interest. After he sold his business, Carnegie moved into a newly built mansion in Manhattan (complete with an elevator and a prototype air-conditioning system) and wrote tracts in a library with Sunday school-type mottoes painted high on the walls. Gazing up from his desk at the injunction that 'Thine Own Reproach Alone Do Fear', Carnegie worried about the contrast between "the palace of the millionaire and the cottage of the laborer".

To combat the dangers of "rigid castes" living in "mutual ignorance" and "mutual distrust" of each other, he poured millions of dollars into building public libraries – more than 2,500 of them around the world. This munificence was possible because of the vast business he had created and was therefore, to him, evidence that great concentrations of wealth could (at least in the right hands, such as his own) bring about a great dispersion of public benefit.

A disappearing world

Contrary to the way they are often imagined, the robber barons were in fact the champions neither of unfettered free markets nor of unfettered individualism. Paternalists more than libertarians, they saw rational central planning as the antidote to the insecurity and irrationality of market competition. Hailed for their role in the onrush of modernity, they harked back to the virtues of a disappearing world and worried about the spiritual and social consequences of the gulf between rich and poor to which they had contributed so much. Their material success assured, the robber barons sought something more: validation that their work was of public worth.

These larger-than-life industrialists had an all-too-human capacity for self-deception, and it is easy – and not entirely unfair – to charge them with hypocrisy. But that does not mean we should not take seriously their own rationalisations. The words of these robber barons reveal much about how these powerful men made the choices that helped shape our world. ■

Adam IP Smith is a senior lecturer at University College London, specialising in American history

DISCOVER MORE

RADIO

▶ **The Robber Barons,** a new Radio 4 series presented by Adam IP Smith, is due to air from 17 October



A walk through history

The UK's servicemen and women have been involved in more than 50 operations and conflicts since 1948. Dive into the nation's history at the **National Memorial Arboretum** and pay tribute to them and many others

A little to the north of Birmingham, in Staffordshire, sits the National Memorial Arboretum. It's a beautiful landscaped site encompassing more than 150 acres of lovingly maintained gardens, 30,000 trees and more than 300 memorials to the men and women who served the United Kingdom in the military and civilian services, as well as our allies from other nations.

For historians, it's a fascinating place to visit. Each memorial gives an insight into a particular moment or event in British history. Four discovery shelters, a daily programme of activities including tours, buggy and guided walks and talks help interpret the subtle symbolism behind the memorials which are constructed from materials including wood, bronze, glass and stone. A new Remembrance Centre with the permanent Landscapes of Life Exhibition as well as exhibition spaces, helps interpret the cultural significance of Remembrance and how we, as individuals and a society, have and continue to remember.

It's also a wonderful day out for all the family. The beautifully forested grounds have been expertly maintained by the staff of volunteers, and thoughtfully planted. Take the Mediterranean Campaigns area, for example, which is entirely planted with species from southern Europe, or The Beat, a tribute to the British police lined with horse chestnut trees – the material from which the first police truncheons were constructed.

ARMED FORCES MEMORIAL

Dedicated: 12 October 2007

Dedicated in the presence of Her Majesty The Queen, the six-metre high mound of the Armed Forces Memorial forms the centrepiece of the site. It's inspired by ancient burial mounds like Avebury and Silbury Hill, but also draws influences from the classical era, namely the Pantheon and the Tomb of Augustus in Rome.

Inside you'll find a dedication to every serviceman or woman who has fallen while on duty since 1948. More than 16,000 of their names are recorded inside.

On Armistice Day, at the eleventh hour, a shaft of sunlight shines through a gap in the southern wall and strikes the central brass wreath. The memorial is currently undergoing maintenance and will reopen in November.



Armed Forces Memorial – National Memorial Arboretum

THE BURMA RAILWAY MEMORIAL

Dedicated: 15 August 2002

The construction of the Burma Railway is one of the most infamous episodes of the Second World War. Prisoners of war and local labourers were forced to build a 258-mile railway between Bangkok, Thailand and Rangoon, Burma (now Myanmar), with the loss of over 100,000 lives. Today's memorial is built using 30 metres of track and sleepers from the original railway.

SHOT AT DAWN MEMORIAL

Unveiled: 21 June 2001

The unrelenting horror of the First World War took its toll on the mental health of many soldiers. Three hundred and forty six British men were executed for desertion after a brief trial, but it's now recognised that many were suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. After a lengthy campaign led by Janet Booth, the granddaughter of executed solider Private Harry Farr, 306 of the men received posthumous pardons in 2006. This monument honours their memory, with a stake for each fallen soldier. The six conifers facing them represent the members of the firing squad.



Shot At Dawn Memorial – National Memorial Arboretum



WIN

A luxury weekend trip for two

One lucky reader has the opportunity to win an exclusive visit to the National Memorial Arboretum, including a VIP buggy tour of the Arboretum and an overnight stay in the nearby Hilton at St George's Park including a two-course lunch. Two runners-up will receive the prize of a free guided walk and free entry into the Landscapes of Life exhibition. Enter at **historyextra.com/sponsored/thenma**

Terms and conditions: Closing date: 15 October 2016 11:59PM. Entrants must be aged 18 or over and based in the UK. Prizes are valid on Friday and Saturdays and must be booked and taken between the 12 November 2016 and 31 March 2017. Full Ts and Cs available at historyextra.com/sponsored/thenma

THERE'S MORE TOO...

The Arboretum is the only UK site to observe a daily act of Remembrance, which is held at 11am in the on-site chapel. The large restaurant and separate coffee shop provide visitors with the opportunity to sample a delicious range of foods, including mouthwatering slices of homemade cake, a daily roast and barista-crafted coffees.

FREE ADMISSION – open daily throughout the year from 9am – 5pm

COVER STORY

THE CURSE OF THE NINE-DAY QUEEN

Lady Jane Grey was put on the English throne by her scheming father-in-law, deposed by her power-hungry cousin and condemned to death by her own father's treason. **Nicola Tallis** tells the story of a tragic victim of her royal blood



This portrait, painted in c1590–1600, is thought to depict Lady Jane Grey. England's shortest-reigning monarch was a reluctant pawn in her father-in-law's bid for power, and when that bid went wrong she was to pay the ultimate price

GETTY IMAGES

On 13 November 1553, the 17-year-old Lady Jane Grey became the youngest royal woman to be condemned for treason in British history. Her trial – staged at Guildhall in the heart of the city of London – was a very public humiliation. For Jane, its outcome was a personal catastrophe.

How had it come to this? A mere four months earlier, some of the most powerful men in England had conveyed Jane, the great-niece of Henry VIII, to the Tower of London, where they proclaimed her queen. But now here she was, facing her accusers, her nine-day reign well and truly over, her very life hanging by a thread.

The seeds of Jane's spectacular fall from grace were sown, earlier in 1553, by one of Edward VI's last acts as king of England. Edward was a committed Protestant and when he succeeded his father, Henry VIII, as king in 1547, he immediately took it upon himself to impose religious reforms upon his people.

But championing Protestantism in his lifetime wasn't enough for Edward. He wanted the work to continue after his death, and that meant preventing his fiercely Catholic elder half-sister, Mary, from succeeding to the throne. His solution was to author a famous document, 'My Devise for the Succession', in which he excluded both Mary, and his other half-sister, Elizabeth, on the grounds of their illegitimacy (as his father had done before him). Lady Jane Grey, a fellow Protestant who had sat third in the line of succession, suddenly found herself anointed Edward's heir.

What made Edward's 'Devise' all the more significant – and explosive – was the fact that it had in part been orchestrated by the young king's chief advisor, John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland. Northumberland was an ambitious man, desperate to retain his grip on power, something that would inevitably be diminished should Mary succeed to the throne – for the simple fact that she loathed him, for both religious and political reasons.

Bonds of allegiance

Edward's 'Devise' gave Northumberland a priceless opportunity to shore up his position – and in May 1553 he did just that, persuading Jane's naïve father, the Duke of Suffolk, to allow Jane to be married to Northumberland's fourth son, Guildford. The alliance was an attempt to cement the bonds of allegiance for what lay ahead – chiefly Jane's succession to the throne, for which Northumberland's support was essential.



Edward VI (top left) rejects the pope (sat below him) in an allegorical painting from c1570. The boy-king was a committed Protestant

Edward was determined to prevent Mary succeeding to the throne. So Jane suddenly found herself anointed his heir

When, on 6 July 1553, Edward VI died – possibly from tuberculosis – Northumberland's scheme appeared to be falling into place perfectly. But, even as Jane processed to the Tower of London to be formally proclaimed queen four days after the king's death, Northumberland's plan was beginning to unravel. The people of London, who were overwhelmingly sympathetic to Mary's claim to the throne, greeted Jane's accession with shock and hostility – so much so that the imperial ambassador reported that "no one present showed any sign of rejoicing".

Worse still, Northumberland had fatally misjudged Mary's popularity throughout the country. As each day passed, the clamour for Henry VIII's eldest daughter to be given the crown grew louder. Soon it had gathered an unstoppable momentum. On 19 July, just nine days after she had been proclaimed queen, Jane was overthrown in Mary's favour.

With her short reign at an end, Jane and her husband remained in the Tower – prisoners in the same building that had so briefly been their palace. As the country erupted into joy at the succession of Mary I, few spared a thought for Jane's predicament. In fact, many would have considered her fate a foregone conclusion: after all, she had, albeit unwillingly, accepted the crown in defiance of Mary, an act of high treason. Surely she would be executed.

But Mary was eager to begin her reign by demonstrating clemency, and by the middle of August she had intimated to those at court that she "could not be induced to consent that she [Jane] should die". Not only was Jane her cousin, Mary was also acutely conscious of Jane's youth and the fact that she had been manipulated. It seemed that Jane's life was safe. There was to be no such mercy for the Duke of Northumberland, and on 22 August his head was cut off.

Queen's prerogative

The next few months passed by uneventfully for Jane in the Tower, but she had not been forgotten. As the autumn drew in, under immense pressure from her supporters to punish those who had been involved in the

ALAMY

Lady Jane Grey: a life cut short

1536

Lady Jane Grey was probably born in the latter half of 1536, perhaps at Dorset House in London. She was the eldest daughter of Henry Grey, later Duke of Suffolk, and Lady Frances Brandon.

28 January 1547

Henry VIII dies, leaving his nine-year-old son, **Edward, as his heir.** Jane is now officially third in line to the throne.



Henry VIII depicted in a contemporary lead medal

Spring and Summer 1553



Edward VI (left) draws up and makes several amendments to 'My Devise for the Succession', whereby he disinherits his half-sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, **naming Jane his heir.**

25 May 1553

Lady Jane Grey is married to Guildford Dudley, the fourth son of the Duke of Northumberland, in a magnificent ceremony at Durham House.

6 July 1553

Edward VI dies at Greenwich Palace, and **Jane becomes queen of England.**

10 July 1553

Jane enters the Tower of London, from where she is publicly proclaimed queen. The same evening, a letter from Mary arrives at the Tower, **declaring herself to be queen.**



Mary I enjoyed the support of the people of London

19 July 1553

Jane is officially deposed in Mary's favour. As London erupts in celebration, Jane is escorted from the royal apartments to prison quarters, there to await news of her fate.



13 November 1553

Jane and Guildford stand trial at Guildhall. They both plead guilty, and are **condemned to death.** The couple return to the Tower.

Jane with her husband, Guildford Dudley

January 1554

Jane's father, the Duke of Suffolk, **joins the Wyatt Rebellion** against Queen Mary.



Jane rebuts John Feckenham's attempts to convert her to Catholicism

7 February 1554

The Wyatt Rebellion ends in disaster. Sir Thomas Wyatt and his supporters are captured in London and sent to the Tower.



The doomed rebel Thomas Wyatt

8 February 1554

Dr John Feckenham arrives at the Tower. He and Jane begin a series of religious debates instigated by Feckenham in an **unsuccessful attempt to convert Jane to Catholicism.** Jane prepares to meet her end.

12 February 1554

Jane and Guildford are executed. Guildford is subjected to a public beheading on Tower Hill, while Jane is granted a private execution within the confines of the Tower.

ALAMY/TOPFOTO/BRIDGEMAN/GETTY IMAGES



coup, Mary agreed that Jane and her husband should stand trial. Some form of justice had to be seen to be done, and in Mary's eyes the trial was a formality, one that would help to pacify those who urged her to act against her cousin. As queen, it was Mary's prerogative to administer mercy where she deemed fit.

On the morning of 13 November, Jane and Guildford were conducted on foot from the Tower to Guildhall. As they passed through the streets, "with the axe before them" according to standard procedure, people gathered to watch, but Jane was absorbed in the prayer book that was open in her hands.

Upon arrival at Guildhall, the prisoners were escorted to the Great Hall, where their trial was staged in a room full of spectators. A whole host of Mary's supporters had been appointed to oversee the proceedings, headed by the Duke of Norfolk. The queen had commanded those who sat in judgment to "apply yourself diligently" to the task, and to ensure that justice prevailed.

The charges against Jane were read out, and the evidence was laid before the court: Jane had "falsely and treacherously" accepted the crown of England and acknowledged herself as "Jane the Queen", thereby depriving Mary of "her royal status, title, order and power of her kingdom of England". In so doing, she had committed high treason.

All eyes were upon Jane as those in the court waited to hear how she would plead to the charges. Her answer came soon enough: "Guilty." This one word placed Jane "at the mercy of the queen" and, as such, the court's verdict was a foregone conclusion: Jane and her husband were found guilty of treason and condemned to die. For Jane, the sentence was that "on the order of the queen herself", she should be "burned, or the head cut off, as it will then please the queen".

Following their condemnation, Jane and Guildford were returned to the Tower, there to await Queen Mary's decision as to their fate. Despite the enormity of the sentence that had been passed, however, Mary remained true to her initial desire to show mercy, and it was commonly believed that "Jane will not die". Life as a Tower prisoner began to resume its normal course for Jane, as it became evident that the sentence passed against her would not be carried out.

As Christmas approached, Mary relaxed the conditions of Jane's confinement and permitted her to exercise in the Tower grounds. There seemed every reason to hope

TOPFOTO



Paul Delaroche's heavily idealised depiction of Lady Jane Grey's final moments, painted in 1833, shows Jane being guided to the block by Sir John Brydges, lieutenant of the Tower. The painting is given greater poignancy by the fact that two of Jane's ladies are shown weeping and that even Jane's executioner is moved to avert his eyes

that not only would the queen spare Jane, but that she may eventually set her at her liberty. However, the machinations of ambitious men were to put Jane in terrible danger once more.

Marital woes

By early 1554, Mary had signalled her desire to marry Philip, future king of Spain. Many of her subjects vehemently opposed the union – primarily because they feared that Philip would try to embroil England in Spanish wars, and because the Spanish king was a Catholic. Mary, however, was unmoved, and plans for the wedding continued unabated.

But Mary, it seems, had underestimated the level of opposition to the union. Unbeknown to the queen – and, tragically, also to Jane – there were those among her subjects who were preparing to take a stand against the marriage. In the heart of the Kent countryside, a gentleman named Sir Thomas Wyatt and several of his friends were planning a rebellion that aimed not only to protest against the Spanish marriage, but also to overthrow Mary and replace her with her half-sister, Elizabeth. Worse still, the rebels had recruited a supporter closely connected to Jane: her own father.

The sentence was that Jane should be "burned, or the head cut off, as it will then please the queen"

We can't be sure why Jane's father chose to throw his weight behind the Wyatt Rebellion, but one thing is certain: in doing so, the Duke of Suffolk had placed Jane's life at mortal risk.

The rebellion was fatally compromised almost before it began. The rebels had been careless planners, and in January 1554 their plot was discovered. Soon the Duke of Suffolk was fleeing towards the Midlands in order to evade capture and rally support for the uprising. He failed dismally and, on 2 February, was captured in Warwickshire, and dispatched to the Tower as a prisoner. Thomas Wyatt would soon join him. Londoners' steadfast support for Queen Mary had shattered his attempts to take control of the capital and, on 7 February, he too was captured.

Jane had known nothing of the rebellion but now, as she languished in the Tower, she may have been painfully conscious that her life depended on its outcome. Its failure sealed her fate. Though Mary was, even after all that had happened, "considering to have her reprieved", through the insistence of her advisors she was left with no choice but to order Jane's execution. The decision may have been made as late as 7 February, and it was probably that evening that Jane was told to prepare herself for death. She had already been condemned, and thus the formalities had already been settled. Jane prepared for her end with courage, and began writing her final farewells to her family.

Mary may have decided that Jane could not live, but she was still concerned for her cousin's spiritual welfare. So, on 8 February, the queen tasked her chaplain, Dr John Feckenham, with converting Jane to Catholicism. Feckenham certainly gave it his all, even managing to delay Jane's execution by three days to complete his assignment.

Several contemporaries later referred to the chaplain's encounter with Jane, most famously John Foxe, the martyrologist. Foxe tells that, having failed to break Jane's resolve, and realising that he was getting nowhere, Feckenham took his leave, saying that he was sorry for her: "'For I am sure,' quoth he, 'that we two shall never meet.'"

Foxe continues: "'True it is,' said she, 'that we shall never meet, except God turn your heart; for I am assured, unless you repent and turn to God, you are in an evil case.'"

As Feckenham discovered, Jane's resolve had hardened. By now she had resigned herself to the fact that death was inevitable, and she was determined to be remembered as a Protestant heroine. Even Feckenham was impressed with her steadfast spirit.

Lifeless corpse

On the morning of 12 February, Jane mounted a scaffold that had been specially prepared within the precincts of the Tower. Shortly before, she had watched as her husband's lifeless corpse was returned to the Tower on a cart, following his execution on nearby Tower Hill. Unperturbed by this gruesome spectacle, she faced death with courage. She made a short speech urging those who were present to pray for her and, having been blindfolded, she knelt on the straw.

Then her calm momentarily deserted her, as she found that the block was just out of her reach. "What shall I do? Where is it?" she cried out in panic. She regained her composure as her hands were guided to the block. Moments later the axe fell and severed her head with a single stroke.

Jane's death made her a martyr, not just to Protestants in England but across the continent too. Elsewhere in the realm, though, her end went almost unnoticed. It was not until later centuries that Jane began to be remembered as one of history's most tragic victims. And in this image there is some truth: Jane was both a victim of circumstance, and of her royal blood.

Mary I certainly did not wish for Jane's execution and did everything in her power to prevent it. But, from the moment 'the nine-day queen' was deposed in July 1553, death cast a long shadow over her. Her father's actions made it a cruel reality. For Jane, the royal blood that the two cousins shared had been a deadly inheritance, and one for which she was forced to pay the highest price.

Nicola Tallis is an author and historian specialising in Tudor England

DISCOVER MORE

BOOK

▶ **Crown of Blood: The Deadly Inheritance of Lady Jane Grey** by Nicola Tallis is published in November by Michael O'Mara Books

OUR FIRST WORLD WAR

The Somme staggers on

In part 30 of his personal testimony series, **Peter Hart** takes us back to November 1916, when conflict on the Somme was stuttering to a halt but ground and air forces still faced daily horrors. Peter is tracing the experiences of 20 people who lived through the First World War – via interviews, letters and diary entries – as its centenary progresses

ILLUSTRATIONS BY JAMES ALBON



James McCudden

Born in 1895, James joined the Royal Flying Corps as an air mechanic in 1913. By December 1915, he had become a regular observer/gunner for several pilots and he qualified as a sergeant pilot in April 1916.

Sergeant James McCudden had gained much experience in flying a DH2 scout with 29 Squadron, Royal Flying Corps. On 9 November, he was patrolling over the Somme and Arras battlefields accompanied by Lieutenants Oswald Ball and Jack Noakes. Suddenly McCudden sighted six specks to the east of the German lines.

"The Hun machines overtook us and directly they got within range we turned to fight. One Hun came down at me nose-on but then turned away, and in doing so I got a good view of the Hun which I had never seen before. It had a fuselage like the belly of a fish. Its wings were cut fairly square at the tips and had no dihedral angle. The tail-plane was of the shape of a spade. We learned later that these machines were the new German Albatros.

We were a long way east of the line, so we all knew that we had to fight hard or go down. I saw a fat Hun about 10 yards behind Ball absolutely filling him with lead, as Ball was flying straight, apparently changing a drum of ammunition. I could not go to Ball's assistance as I had two Huns after me fairly screaming for my blood. However, Ball did not go down. Noakes was having a good time too, and was putting up a wonderful show.

I heard a terrific clack, bang, crash, rip behind me, and found a Hun was firing from about 10 yards in the rear, and his guns seemed to be firing in my very ears. I at once did a half-roll, and as the Hun passed over me I saw the black and white streams on his inter-plane struts. By now, however, we had fought our way back to our lines, and all three of us had kept together, which was undoubtedly our salvation.

The Germans had been flying the new Albatros DI scouts, armed with two machine guns firing through the propeller. Faster and more powerful, they totally outclassed the DH2. McCudden and his companions had been lucky to escape. On landing, McCudden examined his aircraft.

"It was in a bad way. My tail-plane was a mass of torn fabric, and various wires were hanging, having been cut by bullets. I had a good look round and found that the Huns had scored 24 hits. This was the greatest number I have ever had.

"I got a good view of the Hun which I had never seen before. It had a fuselage like the belly of a fish"



Sir Douglas Haig

Haig had served in the army for some 30 years when, in December 1915, he was appointed to command the British forces on the western front. He oversaw the planning for the Somme.

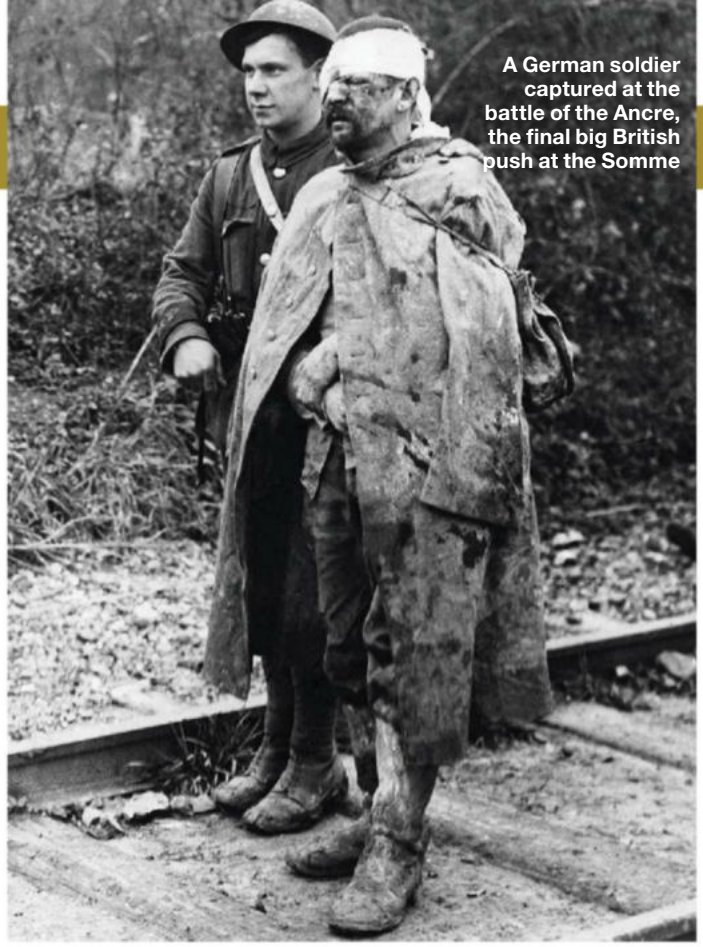
Haig was in a quandary. The Somme offensive was staggering as winter made operations increasingly difficult. On 8 November he met with General Sir Hubert Gough commanding the 5th Army to decide whether to make another attack. Thousands of men's lives were at stake, but Haig was desperate for one final victory.

"I told him that a success at this time was much wanted – firstly, on account of the situation in Romania, we must prevent the enemy from withdrawing any divisions from France to that theatre. Next, the feeling in Russia is not favourable to the French or to ourselves. We are thought to be accomplishing little. Lastly, on account of the Chantilly Conference which meets on Wednesday.

The British position will doubtless be much stronger (as memories are short!) if I could appear there on the top of the capture of Beaumont Hamel for instance, and 3,000 German prisoners. It would show too that we had no intention of ceasing to press the enemy on the Somme. But the necessity for a success must not blind our eyes to the difficulties of ground and weather. Nothing is so costly as a failure! But I am ready to run reasonable risks.

The result would be the battle of the Ancre, launched on 13 November.

ALAMY



A German soldier captured at the battle of the Ancre, the final big British push at the Somme

PART 30 NOVEMBER 1916

"The whole sky was red. You could hear the shells going over and – really and truly – you could almost feel them"



Joe Murray

Joe grew up in a County Durham mining community. He arrived in Gallipoli with the Hood Battalion of the Royal Naval Division in April 1915 and was soon moved to engineering duties as a sapper.

Ordinary Seaman Joe Murray had come to the western front with the Royal Naval Division following the evacuation of Gallipoli in January 1916. The RND had been kept out of the earlier Somme battles, but were finally thrown into the battle of the Ancre on 13 November 1916. This represented Haig's last 'throw of the dice' on the Somme. The night before the attack was a miserable experience for Murray.

"The attack was due at 5.45 the next morning. We'd got 14 hours to wait. In the open! In the mist it was, and the rain, people will swear falling into water, awful lot of noise although we tried to keep quiet. We didn't know where the Germans were, but we knew they were in front. We knew what we had to attack, we were getting a bit shaky, no doubt about it. We ceased to have any conversation.

It was cold and wet and they had no shelter and no hot food. And they were scared.

"I was lying in this hole, the next man to me was about 5 or 6 feet away. I've got a sack of blinking bombs for my head; that was my pillow. It must have been about midnight, but I saw someone come along. I heard this fellow talking and I find out it's Colonel Freyberg. He'd come along to inspect his troops before the attack. He was quite cheerful, wondering how we were getting on. "Do try and get some sleep!"

What sleep they were able to get was fitful, broken by the sounds of battle and the penetrating cold.

"The official record says that someone brought round some tea at five o'clock – I never saw any tea! Then we had to fix bayonets. There's always a noise with fixing bayonets, a clink, a metallic noise, so you put your tunic round it to deaden it. At 5.45 all the watches were synchronised: "Bang! Bang! Bang!" All of a sudden, behind us, the whole sky was red. You could hear the shells going over your head and – really and truly – you could almost feel the shells. The light was first, the shell was next – and then the sound!

Murray's Hood Battalion went forward with some success, although the line was held up on the left. Then Lieutenant Colonel Bernard Freyberg personally took control of the situation and led the Hoods off in a pell-mell attack on their objective: the shattered ruins of Beaucourt Railway Station.

"The barrage lifted and off we go again. There was firing going on all over the place: our own shells falling short, the Jerries firing from left and right, our left flank was vacant. They say run, but you stumble, picking your way round the shell holes. Sometimes there are two or three of you together, sometimes there was nobody. They'd got behind or blown up, you don't know. We get to this point on the other side of the sunken road and we capture it.

I was almost near the station. We had to go down this road and up the side. Well, we got our 'P' bombs out and chucked them down there. As you went along you could smell these phosphorous bombs – a rotten lousy smell. I saw some crowds of prisoners, "Quick, quick, quick! Get back!" Some of them wouldn't behave themselves and we shot them. No doubt about it – 'BANG' – you had no time to fool around with them.

Murray had fought his way through Gallipoli without a scratch and had earned himself the nickname of 'Lucky Durham'. In the total confusion that prevailed in front of the village of Beaucourt he finally ran out of luck.

"A shell burst very near. It hit me crouched down and I got a wound in the abdomen, little bits of shrapnel in here and a bit of a shell took off the skin and pubic hair. Nasty. The abrasion was worse than the wound. The next I knew I was lying on a stretcher and somebody washing the mud off my face.

Murray was sent back to England with a 'Blighty' wound. Lieutenant Colonel Freyberg was awarded the Victoria Cross for his courage during the fighting. The battle of the Ancre had been a tactical success, but overall the Somme was a human tragedy for the Allies. Between 1 July and 18 November, the British suffered some 419,654 casualties, of which some 113,000 were dead. There were a further 204,253 French casualties. Could anything be worth such suffering?

Peter Hart is the oral historian at the Imperial War Museum

DISCOVER MORE

WEBSITE

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TV AND RADIO

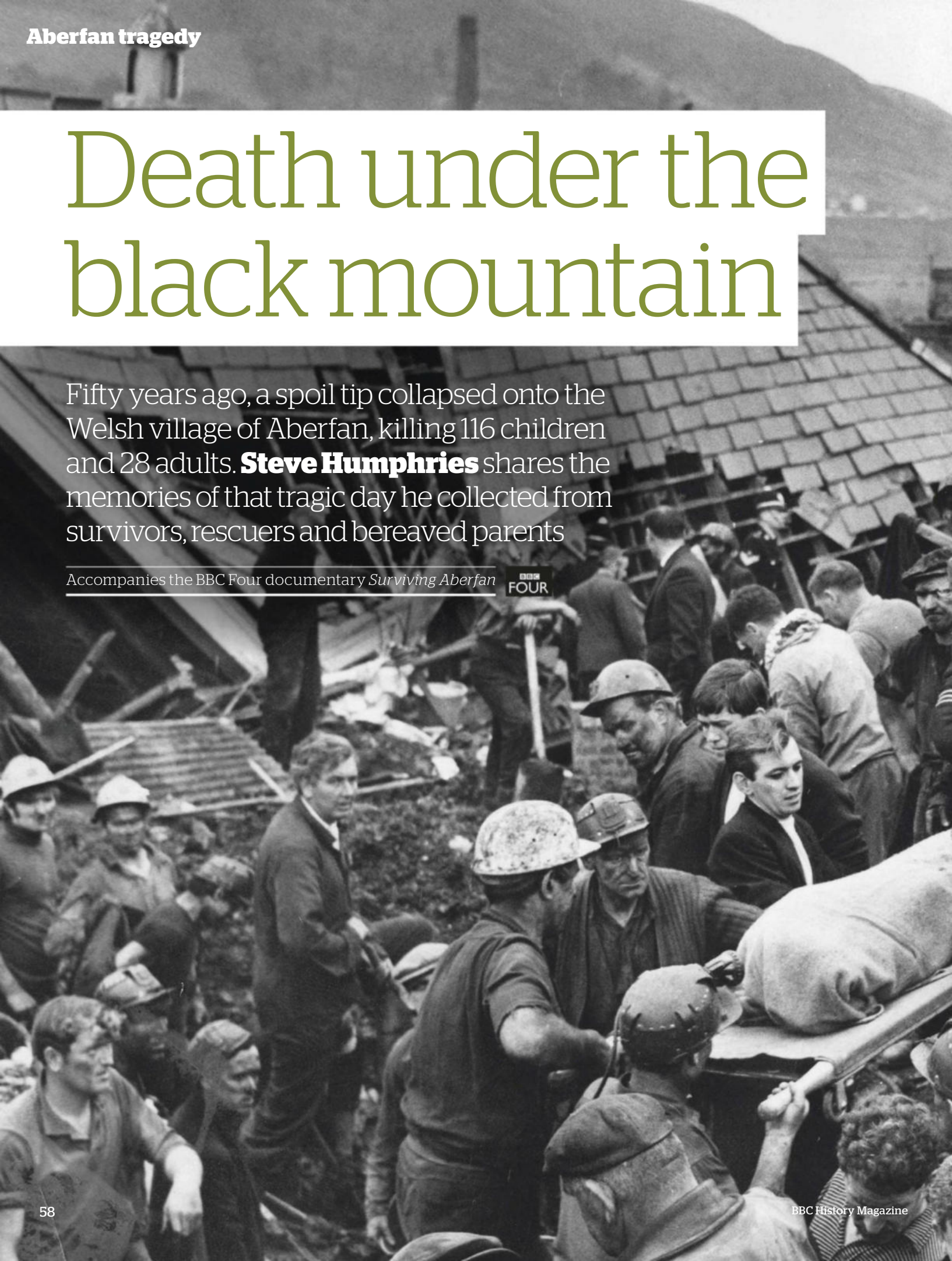
▶ The BBC's **First World War coverage** is continuing – please check the TV & Radio updates on *historyextra.com /bbchistorymagazine*

NEXT ISSUE: "As soon as I got home, I burnt all my underclothes to get rid of lice"

Death under the black mountain

Fifty years ago, a spoil tip collapsed onto the Welsh village of Aberfan, killing 116 children and 28 adults. **Steve Humphries** shares the memories of that tragic day he collected from survivors, rescuers and bereaved parents

Accompanies the BBC Four documentary *Surviving Aberfan* BBC FOUR





A body is recovered from Pantglas Junior School in Aberfan as rescuers scour the debris for survivors. Though a few were pulled out alive, it's believed most children died almost instantly when the landslide hit the school

ALAMY

At about 9.15am on Friday 21 October 1966, spoil tip No 7 – one of seven slag heaps that loomed like a mountain range high above the south Wales village of Aberfan – started to move. Then, almost in the blink of an eye, the entire edifice was transformed into a 30-feet-high tsunami of sludge that slid downhill at over 80mph. Seconds later, a wave consisting of half a million tonnes of liquefied coal waste crashed into Aberfan. The wave swept across a canal and over an embankment before bearing down on the village primary school.

The children and staff of Pantglas Junior School were about to start their lessons on the last day before half-term. Suddenly they felt a deep shuddering and heard a deafening roar like a jet plane taking off close by. Before anyone had a chance to react, the walls and windows of four of the school's seven classrooms were violently breached and the school was inundated almost instantly by a powerful surge of cloying black sludge – over 1.4 million cubic feet of liquefied slurry. By the time the slithering mass came to a halt a few seconds later, dozens of children and adults had been engulfed where they stood or sat.

Survivors' voices

My new BBC Four documentary brings together freshly recorded memories of the disaster. One such account came from Jeff Edwards, who was eight years old at the time that he was trapped by the sludge. "I was gasping for breath because the air was getting less and less, but at least I had that pocket of air. The panic really set in when I thought: how was I going to get out?" For a few

Walls and windows were violently breached and **the school was inundated almost instantly** by a powerful surge of cloying black sludge

moments after the avalanche an eerie silence enveloped Aberfan as the villagers tried to take in the unimaginable horror of what had just happened. Then they rushed to the school and began frantically clawing at the rapidly re-solidifying slurry.

Miraculously, some children survived. Seven-year-old Karen Thomas and four other children in the school hall were saved by their brave dinner lady, Nansi Williams, who sacrificed her life by diving on top of them to shield them from the slurry. "We were shouting and trying to pull her hair to see if we could get a response from her, because she wasn't saying anything to us," Karen recalled. "We didn't know what was happening. We couldn't hear anything else. It was just our voices and screams we could hear."

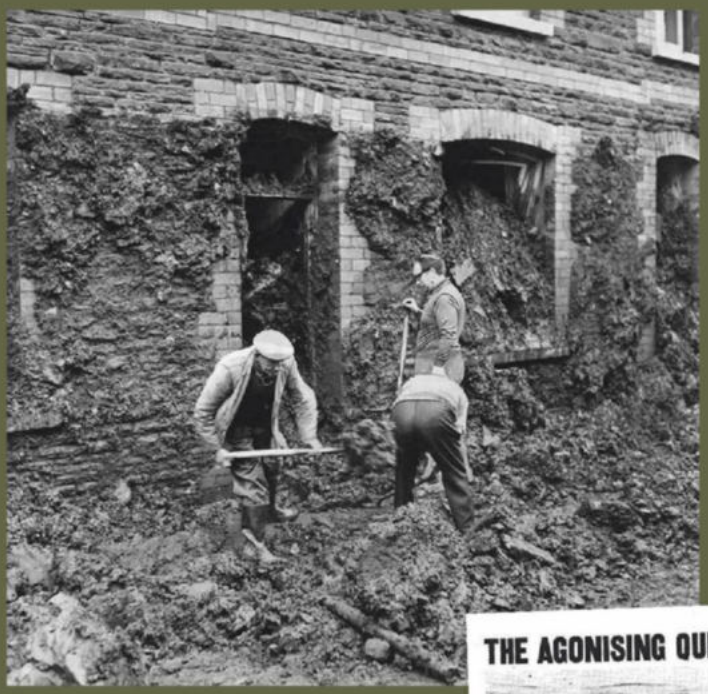
Ten-year-old Phil Thomas was buried as he walked across Moy Road outside the adjacent senior school, and briefly lost consciousness. "I woke, pitch black, buried, I couldn't see a thing," he said. "Then I started crying. I was shouting for my mum."

Phil was still in grave danger: a torrent of water from fractured mains was spreading through the slurry. "He was trapped by his feet and we just couldn't get him out," recounted Len Haggett, one of the first firemen on the scene. "The water was rising and coming up to his head. We thought he might drown. There were about seven of us firemen there, and we gave this one final lift and we lifted this wall that had collapsed on him. We were elated that we'd saved his life but to this day I don't know how we managed to lift that much weight."

Crop of blonde hair

Back in the wrecked classrooms of the junior school, more firemen were inching their way through the mass of muck and rubble. Through a window they spotted a crop of blonde hair. It was Jeff Edwards, who later recalled that "I couldn't move at all because my desk was against my stomach. On my left-hand side there was a girl's head next to my face, and I couldn't get away from the fact she had died. All I could see was a small aperture of light. And the next thing I remember is that the firemen smashed the window and they got in. They got down to my desk but they couldn't shift it to get me out, so they got their hatchets out and actually broke up the desks. Then they carried me out to safety."

From 11 o'clock in the morning the rescuers were confronted by a grim reality – that all of the children they were finding in the school were dead. Many were still sitting at their desks, entombed by the slurry. At this point the miners, some of them fathers of children at the school, effectively took over from the firemen. The lead was taken by the local coal board's Mines Rescue Service, established to rescue miners trapped underground.



LEFT: **Men dig out solidified black sludge from one of the 18 houses hit by the landslip.** BELOW LEFT: **Policeman Victor Jones carries young survivor Susan Maybank from the ruined school.** BELOW RIGHT: **The headline in the *Daily Mirror* on the day after the disaster. Though the National Coal Board denied responsibility, a tribunal blamed the NCB**





BELOW AND RIGHT: **Young survivors Janet Morgan and Colin Adams return home from hospital two days after the disaster. Of 261 pupils at the primary school, only 145 survived – half of a generation of villagers lost**





MIRRORPIPIX/GETTY IMAGES

One of these rescuers was Roy Hamer, who quickly realised that the action had become a recovery rather than a rescue operation. His testimony is important – and comforting for bereaved parents and families – because it suggests that most of the children died instantly and did not suffer for long.

"I honestly believe that the slurry travelling at that rate… once it came into that school… just swept through it, and the damage was done very quickly. If you can understand the slurry was so small and fine that I think the children were more or less suffocated straight away rather than suffered agonies."

With the lives of so many children at stake, the rescue and recovery operation quickly became worldwide news. Early in the day, hopes of finding many survivors were high. But the mood changed with each passing hour as more bodies were brought out. Parents waited in agony, among them Marilyn Brown, hoping that her 10-year-old daughter Janette would be found. "We were waiting, thinking: yes, we're going to have news any minute now of the children, where they are. And we kept asking questions all the time."

Marilyn remembers how her husband Bernard had been digging all morning, hoping to find their daughter. "He came over to one of the walls of the houses opposite, sitting on the wall, absolutely exhausted, and he said: 'I don't know what to do, Marilyn. I don't know what to do.' But eventually news came through that quite a few of the children had been buried. This time you didn't want any more news, because you're still thinking: yes she'll be alright. She'll be fine."

The dead were taken to a makeshift mortuary set up in Bethania Chapel, where many parents had to endure the ordeal of identifying the bodies of their children. Marilyn's husband and father returned from the temporary mortuary to tell her their news.

"My father started to cry and I said: 'Is she alright?' And he said: 'No. Janette has died.' He said he had just identified her. I said: 'I want to go. I want to go and see her.' 'No, no,' he said, 'you don't go and see her, she's fine.' I said: 'What does she look like?' He said: 'She's got a tiny mark on her head and she's sleeping,' and that was that. Well, I just gave in to it then. My father, he was crying and I think it was because he was crying, I was crying as well. But it sort of comes over you then: yes, she's gone."

By the end of the day, 60 bodies had been recovered from the disaster area. The final death toll reached 144, of which 116 victims were children – nearly half of the school's pupils.

"Janette would have been 61 now, and I think: **what would she have been like now?** What would she have done?"

Nine months later, a tribunal published its report on the disaster. It found that the National Coal Board (NCB) was completely to blame for the disaster, despite the fact that, while giving evidence to the tribunal, NCB chairman Lord Robens had claimed that the avalanche was caused by water from unknown springs underneath the tip. In fact, the springs had been known about for many years – they were even shown on the Ordnance Survey map of the area.

Robens and the NCB also denied that the Aberfan tip complex had slid before, despite clear physical evidence, visible to the naked eye, of tip slides in 1944 and 1963. Donations from a public shocked at the tragedy and keen to help the bereaved families raised over £1.6m for the Aberfan Disaster Fund – at that time, the largest sum ever raised in Britain. But to add insult to injury, this was not given in full to the Aberfan community. Instead, £150,000 from the fund was allocated to clear the surrounding coal tips – an operation that was clearly the responsibility of the NCB.

Painful memories

Coming to terms with the loss of so many children has been very difficult for the people of Aberfan. Many still prefer not to talk about it, especially to outsiders. So it took many months for our film crew to win the trust of survivors, rescuers and bereaved families, and to persuade them to tell their stories on camera. In our film, some tell their stories for the first time.

Fireman Len Haggett, who helped rescue Phil Thomas, had never before spoken about the disaster; he had not even told his wife about anything that happened that day, for fear of upsetting her. Even after he received our letter calling for the memories of retired firemen involved in the Aberfan disaster, passed on by the Merthyr Fire Station, Len pondered for months whether to come forward and tell his story. He was from a generation who dealt with horror and tragedy by not talking about it.



ALAMY

Karen Thomas was seven years old when her life was saved by the brave actions of school dinner lady Nansi Williams, who dived on top of several children to shield them from the landslide

Len had no idea of the identity of the boy whose life he helped save. It seems quite extraordinary today that they should have lived within a mile or so of each other and not known each other. Their moving reunion was captured on camera in a scene that, for me, is one of the most poignant in the film. Also present was Len's fellow fireman Dave Thomas who assisted in Phil's rescue.

They had a lot to catch up on – about each other's lives, and what happened on that terrible day – but the most powerful moment came when a tearful Phil thanked the firemen for saving his life, saying: "Until this day and this meeting I never knew who dug me out." Len replied: "We're only sorry we couldn't get more out."

Among the most moving and emotional stories from the tragedy of Aberfan are those of the bereaved parents. They are also the most difficult to document and film. A number of the parents have died since the disaster; some are buried in the children's cemetery on the hill, alongside the sons and daughters they lost in the disaster.

For understandable reasons, surviving mothers and fathers, now mostly in their seventies and eighties, still find it incredibly hard to talk about the day of the disaster. Marilyn Brown retains cherished memories of her daughter, Janette, who was 10 when she died. Marilyn keeps photographs of Janette around her home, and touches them as she passes.

"It gives me a sense of... she's still with us, you know? That feeling of: yes – yes, I do remember you, and I will always remember you ... She would have been 61 now, and I think: what would she have been like now? What would she have done?" H

Steve Humphries is an award-winning film-maker specialising in social history documentaries

DISCOVER MORE

TELEVISION

▶ The documentary **Surviving Aberfan,** featuring interviews with survivors and the bereaved, will be broadcast on BBC Four and BBC One Wales in October

BOOK

▶ **Surviving Aberfan: The People's Story** by Sue Elliott, Steve Humphries and Bevan Jones (Grosvenor House, 2016)

ON THE PODCAST

Steve Humphries discusses the Aberfan tragedy on our weekly podcast:
▶ **historyextra.com/bbchistory magazine/podcasts**

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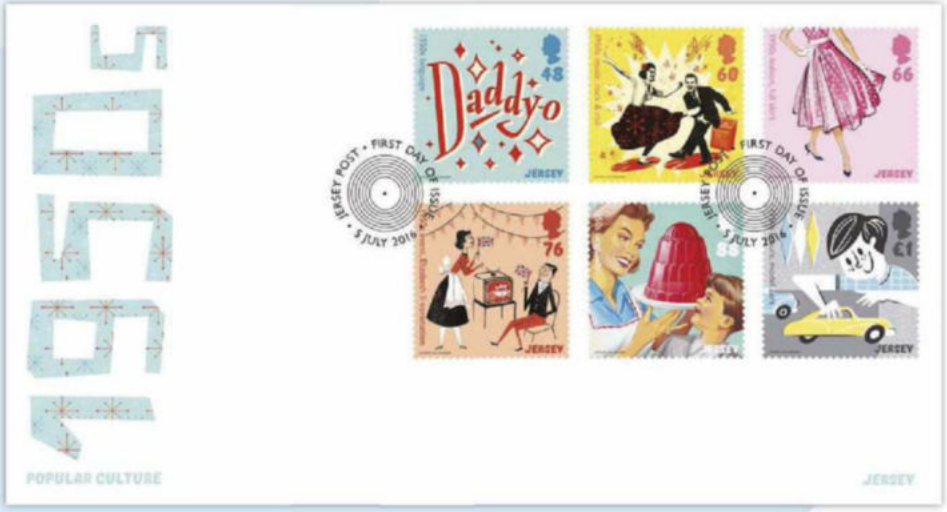




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Catherine Merridale photographed in central London. "Lenin was desperate to get back to Russia and take control. He told his friends they had to do anything," she says

Photography by Fran Monks

FRAN MONKS

INTERVIEW / CATHERINE MERRIDALE

"This was the most important railway journey made in the 20th century"

Catherine Merridale talks to ***Matt Elton*** *about her new book on Lenin's return to Russia from exile in Switzerland during the First World War – and how it shaped history for decades to come*

PROFILE **CATHERINE MERRIDALE**
Merridale, who is a graduate of King's College, Cambridge, taught at institutions including the University of Bristol and the University of London. A pioneer of oral history in Russia, she became a full-time writer in 2014. Her previous books include *Red Fortress: The Secret Heart of Russia's History* (Allen Lane, 2013), which won the Pushkin House Russian Book Prize and the Wolfson History Prize.

IN CONTEXT The Russian communist revolutionary and politician Vladimir Ilyich Ulyanov – better known as Lenin – was the first leader of the Soviet Union. But his path to power was far from smooth: exiled in 1897, he moved to neutral Switzerland following the outbreak of the First World War. The February Revolution, which led to the abdication of Tsar Nicolas II in 1917, prompted Lenin to return to Russia via Germany to aid the socialist cause. Although the two nations were enemies, the Germans hoped, given Lenin's anti-war stance, that his return would bring about Russia's withdrawal from the conflict.

Where was Lenin at the point you start your book and why was he there?

Lenin was in Zurich in Switzerland. He was a revolutionary in exile from the Russian empire and he'd had two choices: leave Russia or be imprisoned. Most revolutionaries were a bit iffy about Switzerland because they thought it was bourgeois, but he liked it because it suited his sense of what was decent and proper: the libraries were great, the trains ran on time and the buses were clean.

Did he feel isolated once the First World War broke out, though?

Yes. All that he could do was to try to organise the European socialist movement, which – being Lenin – he naturally did, because he wasn't going to sit around doing nothing. He was trying to push the movement further to the left, in the direction of absolute hostility to the war.

Lenin's view was always that he'd rather lead a party of one than be in a large group that was going to lead the revolution down a blind alley. He was successful because he deeply believed the war was a capitalist war and that no peace was possible while the bourgeoisie was in charge – and he went on fighting for those beliefs.

Who helped put together the scheme to transport Lenin by train?

When the February Revolution happened, Lenin was desperate to get back to Russia and take control. He told his friends that they had to do anything: he even thought about flying back, which would have been fatal over German lines in primitive aircraft.

Lenin knew that to cross Germany, as a Russian in the territory of Russia's enemy, would make him a traitor. But he gradually came round to the idea. Among the people who persuaded him was a very interesting, attractive man called Karl Radek. He thought that going back through Germany would be possible and reached that idea through the story of Alexander Parvus, an incredibly colourful revolutionary figure from Odessa.

By various means, fair and foul, Parvus had become a multimillionaire as a result of wartime speculation. Part of his work was with the German government, and he had a base in Copenhagen where he used Russian revolutionaries as researchers. He got passes for those researchers to go via Germany, so Radek knew it was possible to get German co-operation without obviously compromising themselves. This led him to work with Lenin to negotiate passage through Germany along with other Russian dissidents.

Who were Lenin's fellow passengers?

A lot of Lenin's friends and contacts were hostile to the plan. And, back in Russia, the foreign minister of the new liberal democratic provisional government said that he would arrest anyone who accepted German help to get to Russia. But Lenin had friends who were willing to take the risk. They included his wife, Nadezhda Krupskaya, his friend and former lover, Inessa Armand, Radek and Grigory Zinoviev, who was a close friend of Lenin's and would have done anything to stay with him.

What was the journey like?

The deal was that the Russians could take a normal train through Switzerland, but could have no contact with the Germans at all on the crossing through Germany. On the border between Switzerland and Germany they had to get off the train and the first shock was that they had all the food they had brought with them – baskets and baskets of it, because the Russians are very good at train travel – taken away. The second shock was that, when they got over the German border, they were made to line up with men on one side and women on the other. They were eventually counted aboard a carriage that was going to be pulled by a succession of engines through German territory. It was a single carriage with two second-class and three third-class compartments. Near the back a chalkline was drawn and that was the international boundary. On one side were the Russians and on the other the Germans, and neither could cross it.

"People heckled them and they saw that they were hated. It must have been very frightening"

Unfortunately, there were only two lavatories in the carriage: one at the back for the two German guards and one at the front for 34 Russians. That was the only place that the Russians could smoke, meaning there was always a long queue of people waiting to use the loo while someone was in there having a fag. So Lenin introduced some of his communist discipline and people were given tickets. First class was for using the loo, while second class was for smoking, and you had to leave the toilet if somebody with a first-class ticket came to the door.

It must have been the most uncomfortable journey: there was no hot water, very little food and nowhere to sleep. The Russians had been segregated from the war in Switzerland, and travelling through Germany seeing starving, hostile faces and tired people was the first time they'd seen its impact. People heckled them and they saw that they were hated. It must have been very frightening.

What impact did Lenin have when he finally arrived in Petrograd in Russia?

He arrived just before midnight on Easter Monday, which was very inconvenient for the local communists because it made it trickier for them to organise a big event. But they still managed to get a band and to decorate the station with flowers, banners and red flags.

Lenin had no idea what would happen to him when he got off the train: he thought he might be arrested or hanged, and he prepared his fellow passengers for the idea that they might be arrested. So he was stunned by the reception. After eight days and nights I would have been very tired, but Lenin was so energetic. He began haranguing the crowd, right there in the station,



A painting shows Lenin being greeted by enthusiastic crowds as he travels atop an armoured vehicle to the Bolshevik party headquarters in Petrograd (now Saint Petersburg), just a few weeks after the overthrow of the tsar

BRIDGEMAN

before making his way into the crowd in the square outside. He was pushed up on to an armoured vehicle that was used as a platform and driven through the streets to the Bolshevik party headquarters. Without a break, without missing a beat, he always gave the same message. Some people said: "He's a traitor, we should stick a bayonet in him," but most just couldn't believe he was advocating peace. They thought he was mad, or that he didn't understand because he'd come from abroad.

And then Lenin made a speech from the balcony of the mansion in which the Bolsheviks had their headquarters. He addressed the crowd, at probably half past one in the morning, and then he went in and told his party the same thing. This was the famous April Theses [which, among other things, denounced Russia's provisional government, called for the Bolsheviks to not co-operate with it, and advocated workers' councils seizing power]. People said he'd lost his mind – even his wife. But within three weeks, because he was patient, organised and determined, he managed to persuade the organisation to change its policy. And that became the Bolshevism that eventually won the day.

You've been on the same journey that Lenin made. What was that like?

It was interesting in all sorts of ways. I asked about Lenin everywhere I went; many people said they had no idea about him. In Malmö in Sweden, for instance, Lenin and his party had dinner in the Savoy Hotel. They were only there for about 45 minutes but it was a big occasion, and there's a brass plaque in the hotel commemorating it. The woman on reception was from Moscow and when I asked her to show me the plaque commemorating Lenin, she said "*John* Lennon?" She didn't really remember Lenin and couldn't believe anyone wanted to talk about him.

So on the one hand he's forgotten and on the other he's everywhere. East Berlin and West Berlin is all down to Lenin. The shape of Finland bears the scars of wars largely started because of the creation of the Soviet Union and of national socialism to oppose it. So Lenin is everywhere and nowhere.

Has writing this book changed your view of Lenin?

As a student in Moscow in the 1980s, I went to see Vladimir Ilyich in his mausoleum. And he was very dead – and dead in a brown suit, too. But he is still everywhere around us: in every archive that I went to on my journey, there was his bust.

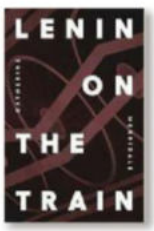
So, to me, Lenin was rather like an old piece of furniture: irritating and dowdy. And, of course, from some of my previous work on the results of the Bolshevik revolution and the oppression and tragedy that followed for people in Russia, he wasn't a character that I warmed to.

But one of the policies that I always have with my writing is that, if there is something I don't understand or don't particularly like, it's time to go and look harder at it. So I wanted to see what Lenin was like at the time that he was really explosive: when he was the fiery revolutionary and not the marble bust. Before he became dead, in other words. And I think that I've done that for myself: I think I do now understand why he was so powerful and charismatic. Not as a leader of people – I don't suppose that, if you passed him in the street, you'd have thought 'wow, that's a big leader' – but a man who could work within a party and whose ideas drove him like no other person of his generation.

> *"Lenin was a man whose ideas drove him like no other person of his generation"*

To what extent was this a journey that changed the world?

It was the most important railway journey made in the 20th century, unquestionably. That's why it's so exciting. There would have been no Soviet Union without it.



Lenin on the Train
by Catherine Merridale
(Allen Lane, 368 pages, £25)



“I don’t need a cunning plan to defeat dementia.”

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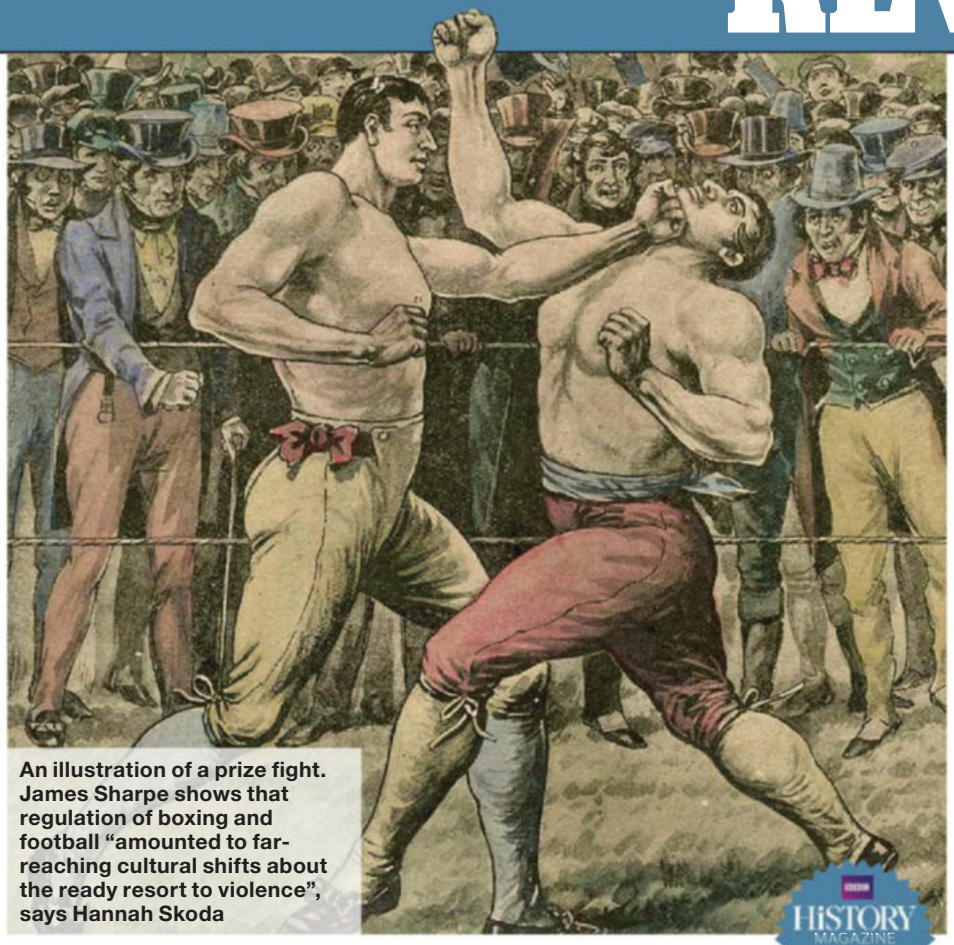
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give with confidence



An illustration of a prize fight. James Sharpe shows that regulation of boxing and football "amounted to far-reaching cultural shifts about the ready resort to violence", says Hannah Skoda

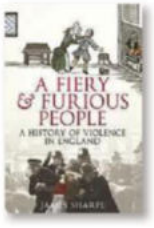
ALAMY

HISTORY MAGAZINE CHOICE

Brawling Brits

HANNAH SKODA *is gripped by a meticulous study of English violence, from medieval dustups to modern mayhem*

A Fiery & Furious People: A History of Violence in England
by James Sharpe
Random House Books, 768 pages, £30



This book's racy and bombastic title is rather misleading – this is a deeply thoughtful and thought-provoking examination of violence in England from the Middle Ages through to the present day. James Sharpe's analysis ranges from medieval homicides to duels, to staggeringly brutal football matches, domestic abuse and riots. It is full of carefully chosen anecdotes and examples that illuminate the analysis and grab the reader's attention so that the thick volume is genuinely hard to put down. Some of the material is amusing, some is chilling, some is tragic. And the book is notable for its very humane sense that the acts of violence it describes, even when committed 800 years ago, wounded and hurt real people and their families.

Violence is, as ever, much in the news. It is also a fashionable subject for historians at the moment and Sharpe weaves his argument through the mass of historiography with great skill, helpfully synthesising much of the recent scholarship. His book deserves to be read as widely as Steven Pinker's oft-cited *The Better Angels of our Nature* and Sharpe's more meticulous and nuanced attention to his sources should shape how seriously we think about the implications of his arguments. He eschews any straightforward narrative or chronology of violence, but it is clear that overall levels of violence have declined over the centuries. There can be no simple explanation of course, but the book provides a series of tantalising and thought-provoking ideas.

Sharpe points out that crowd violence has become rarer since a majority of the population has a material stake in maintaining the status quo – a shift that might be placed somewhere in the second half of the 19th century. On the face of it, this looks like a point scored for the rise of a capitalist society, where material possession reduces the resort to violence and disorder; but it's also a potentially more radical call for greater equality and redistribution. Addressing a huge sweep of time in this way allows for very fruitful comparisons: Sharpe juxtaposes the 1381 Peasants' Revolt with the Brixton Riots of 1981 and the recent riots of August 2011. While springing from radically different causes and structurally very different, all highlight the dangers of allowing large sections of the community to become economically, and often also politically, disempowered. The rebels in 1381 were keen to destroy documents and symbols of corrupt government; the 2011 rioters repeatedly commented that they were excited by the possibility of at least temporarily feeling in control of a particular space and dominating the police.

Fluctuations in the levels and types of violence must also be intertwined with cultural changes. Sharpe explores the role of chivalry in circumscribing and shaping patterns of violence in the Middle Ages and engages with Norbert Elias's famous idea of a 'civilising process' whereby the early modern period saw a rise of courtly manners which placed taboos on the impulsive

It's full of carefully chosen anecdotes and is genuinely hard to put down



COMING SOON...
"Next issue, our reviewers will be exploring new books on subjects including the Roman world, the secret lives of medieval manuscripts, and the tumultuous events of 1666. Plus, I'll be talking to David Olusoga about his new book and TV series, **A Black History of Britain**" *Matt Elton, reviews editor*

resort to violence. There are many problems with Elias's theory, not least that he stereotypes the Middle Ages as unthinkingly brutal and that his courtly manners are emphatically aristocratic. Sharpe addresses these by surveying medieval violence with greater subtlety, and exploring the ways in which taboos were placed on violence across the social spectrum.

A chapter on sport is particularly interesting in this respect: inventing more 'civilised' rules for football, or codifying and regulating boxing matches, amounted to far-reaching cultural shifts about the ready resort to violence.

Part of the strength of the book lies in the very subtle distinctions it draws

Sharpe shows that medieval people had nuanced attitudes to violence

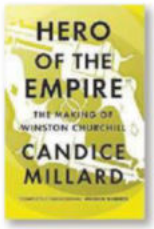
between ways in which violence is represented and talked about, and ways in which violence was perpetrated and prosecuted. In the Middle Ages, horrific violence permeates much of the imaginative literature, and yet Sharpe shows medieval people to have had far more nuanced and complicated attitudes to violence. In the 19th century, levels of violent crime dropped quite dramatically and yet, as Sharpe explains, sen ionali n of horrible crimes and paranoia about the 'criminal classes' reached a peak. He addresses the question of violence in modern media, asking whether video games and films can indeed be held responsible for outbursts of brutality. Referring to a range of scholarship – historical, criminological, psychological and legal – he concludes that no straightforward causation can really be found. And this really matters because, as the book shows, falling for superficial and unprovable explanations of violence is dangerous and irresponsible.

Hannah Skoda is associate professor of medieval history at St John's College, Oxford

Date with destiny

ANDREW ROBERTS *on a new work focusing on one pivotal year that put Churchill on course for greatness*

Hero of the Empire: The Making of Winston Churchill
by Candice Millard
Allen Lane, 400 pages, £20



This book covers one year in the life of Winston Churchill – 1899 – and argues that those 12 months were absolutely epicentral to the man he later became. It was the year that established his national fame, connected his fate to that of the British empire, introduced him to key figures who were to loom large later in his life and set him on the road to his phenomenally successful political career. Business commentators will recognise the phenomenon whereby suddenly a brand goes spectacularly global: 1899 was just such a year for Winston Churchill. As he himself wrote of this period, it "was to lay the foundations of my later life".

Candice Millard is the distinguished author of two other first-class books on the period, about Teddy Roosevelt's travels in Africa and the assassination of James Garfield, and she is excellent at setting the scene in an almost novelistic way before taking the reader through the experiences of her heroes. In Churchill's case, episodes such as the ambush of his train during the Boer War and his subsequent escape from the prisoner of war camp in Pretoria are very well known, but Millard infuses them with an attractive freshness.

Although naturally Churchill's own books, primarily *London to Ladysmith via Pretoria* and *My Early Life*, provide the ballast for Millard's account, she has read deeply around the subject and doesn't take Churchill's word for anything unless she is able to check it against other sources. Her attitude towards him is one of rather bemused affection: she does not seek to underplay his ambition and monomania, but appreciates the way it was leavened with humour, courage and self-deprecation.

The most controversial aspect of Churchill's behaviour in 1899 was in whether or not he had let down his fellow PoWs Captain Aylmer Haldane and Sergeant-Major Brocket in pulling off his stunning prison escape without them, despite it being their escape plan rather than his. They certainly thought so and Millard seems to sympathise with them. Churchill had promised to go over the wall with his comrades, but when he saw his chance he took it. "The only thought that rushed through Churchill's head was 'Now or never'," admits Millard.

His escape came in the same week in December 1899 as Britain's disastrous defeats of Stormberg, Magersfontein and Colenso at the hands of the Boers. The sole piece of good news to lighten the general sense of national gloom, his adventure concentrated the public's mind and, when he turned up alive and well in Portuguese East Africa (modern-day Mozambique), it was the cause of great celebration. In that, as so much else, Churchill was lucky but, as this fine book shows, he also strove hard to make his own luck.



Churchill working as a war correspondent in 1899 – the year, Candice Millard argues, that launched him as a future leader

Andrew Roberts is the author of *Napoleon: A Life* (Penguin, 2014)

ALAMY



A detail from Trajan's column depicting legionaries building fortifications during their routing of the Indo-European Dacian tribe

GETTY IMAGES

Friendship and force

PETER JONES *enjoys an exploration of the Roman formula for stability and success across an unruly empire*

Pax Romana: War, Peace and Conquest in the Roman World
by Adrian Goldsworthy
Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 528 pages, £25



Rome's empire technically started in 241 BC when it made Sicily its first province and technically ended in the west in AD 476, when the last western Roman emperor was sent into retirement by Germanic forces. Over that time, Europe was transformed from a collection of disparate warring tribal states into a broadly unified and mostly peaceful economic powerhouse.

The central theme of Goldsworthy's book is that it is far too simple to see Rome as the ruthless conqueror and the conquered as helpless victims. The tribes of Europe knew all about slaughter – it was the way of the ancient world – and they gave as good as they got.

But the crucial point was made by the emperor Claudius: that Rome's secret was knowing how to turn enemies into friends – a skill they had learned during their conquest of the Italian mainland from the sixth to the third centuries BC – and Goldsworthy shows how adept Rome became at understanding those warring tribes. Rome played off one against the other with treaties of friendship, uncompromising force, or both.

Rome's secret was knowing how to turn enemies into friends

There was nothing unexpected about that. Romans were pragmatists, identifying where their own interests lay and playing the appropriate cards to achieve their ends. Some tribes welcomed the Romans; some outside the empire even begged to be allowed in.

When a province was settled, the local bigwigs largely did the Romans' work for them. As for Rome's tax-demands, the emperor Tiberius told his governors he wanted the sheep sheared, not fleeced. Rome even provided legal redress against corrupt governors.

Much of Rome's success was down to a highly efficient military bureaucracy that turned soldiers into builders, engineers, craftsmen and administrators, intent on consolidating what they had, as well as expanding. Goldsworthy is especially good on the way Rome attempted to keep the lid on disruptive, economy-wrecking raids by brigands and protected its vital frontiers (for example, along the Rhine-Danube) while encouraging trade beyond the empire's bounds.

In this, the best of his many excellent books on ancient Rome for its range and depth, Goldsworthy makes the vital point that "in the ancient world, peace and stability were not the natural and inevitable conditions of states left to their own devices". For all Rome's pleasure in "warring down the arrogant" (that is, anyone who disagreed with them), the result of its empire-building, intended or not, was a flourishing Europe-wide economy, productive cultural impact and lengthy periods of peace, when St Paul and Christian missionaries, for example, could traverse the east untroubled by robbers. That, for all the periodic bloodshed, was what Rome largely achieved over a massive area for some 700 years.

No wonder the Germanic peoples who finally overwhelmed the empire, plunging Europe into a 200-year economic dark age, did so, paradoxically, in order to become part of it.

Peter Jones is the author of *Veni, Vidi, Vici* (Atlantic, 2013)

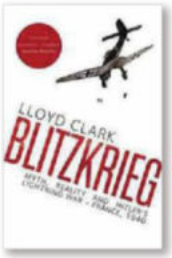


German soldiers outside a captured concrete bunker on the Maginot Line during the invasion that rapidly overran France in May–June 1940

Blueprint for battle

ASHLEY JACKSON *praises a study of Germany's forensic preparations for military dominance over France*

Blitzkrieg: Myth, Reality and Hitler's Lightning War, France 1940
by Lloyd Clark
Atlantic Books, 480 pages, £25



It is a riddle that has fascinated historians: how did Germany sweep the European board so easily in 1940? Advancing rapidly through the Low Countries, its forces then defeated one of the world's greatest armies, achieving in under two months what it had failed to accomplish in the four years prior to November 1918. In June 1940, Hitler flew Paris for a r of the conquered city, deciding that he would not raze it, but instead strive to make Berlin even more magnificent.

It has been argued that victory was achieved through a revolutionary form of warfighting: 'lightning war', a mix of mobile armour and close air support that paralysed the enemy before delivering the coup de grâce. But this explanation, cultivated by the Nazis to frighten enemies and burnish the myth of invincibility, was only half the story.

Writing with authority and clarity, Lloyd Clark contends that it was the application of technology to abiding military good practice that allowed Germany to win so overwhelmingly. The Germans took timeless principles of warfare and successfully remodelled them. Their operational methods and warfighting capabilities were secretively honed during the 1920s; under the Nazis, the army put on weight, evolved doctrine and sought to apply technology in order to give its traditional battlefield ambitions the mobility, speed and co-ordination that could have major effect.

Victory in Europe, therefore, was no mere panzer-Stuka 'blitzkrieg', but a sophisticated all-arms, inter-service team effort, in which the 'teeth' were able to operate with tempo and exploit fleeting opportunities because the logistical 'tail' was so well-developed. Germany's achievement was "rooted in all the advantages provided by a thinking military that had a strong tradition and benefited from relevant training, a sound doctrine, robust leadership and a formidable fighting spirit… Eventual German success, of course, was not due to either the quality or quantity of their military hardware… but where and how their resources were used."

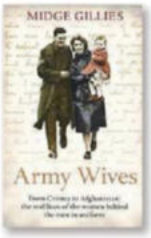
'Lightning war', an idea cultivated by the Nazis to frighten enemies, was only half the story

The failings of French strategy were just as important. Post-Versailles, France had settled upon a defensive posture centred upon alliance with Belgium, the Maginot Line and total mobilisation. But the attritional war the French anticipated

Those left behind

JOANNA BOURKE *looks at a work that tells the story of the wives of men in military service, from the Crimea onwards*

Army Wives: The Real Lives of the Women Behind the Men in Uniform
by Midge Gillies
Aurum Press, 400 pages, £20



George R Sims' 1888 poem, *A Soldier's Wife*, describes how "Amid the roar of thousands he marched away to fight", leaving behind a woman "weeping… at the sight." The soldier "went abroad to conquer or perish in the strife", while "she stopped at home – God help her! – a soldier's starving wife".

Army Wives tells the story of such soldiers' wives, married to those serving in conflicts from the Crimea to Afghanistan. They represent a significant number: today, around 68,000 women are either married to, or in civil partnership with, soldiers. As in the past, many spend much of their lives without the companionship of their loved one. In the 1870s, only one in eight soldiers were allowed to be accompanied by their wives. In Victorian Britain, lots were drawn to see who would be the lucky ones. But those who 'won' often found the nomadic lifestyle disconcerting. Camp life was dirty and dangerous. Living in close proximity to unmarried and coarse soldiers threatened their married respectability, especially given the presence of 'camp followers' who were prostitutes. They were also routinely disparaged by the military authorities. In the words of a 19th-century adage, "a soldier married is a soldier spoiled".

Historians too have not paid army wives as much attention as they deserve. Unfortunately, while Gillies' book attempts to remedy this neglect, large sections of it actually focus on the lives of

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was something the Germans had neither the resources to win or desire to fight. Germany's high-risk strategy focused on concentrating strength against known French weakness and avoiding the enemy where possible. Using surprise and manoeuvre, they hoped to start a sequence of events that would shock and demoralise the French and degrade their will to resist. Rapid though the victory was, it was by no means bloodless: 190,000 Belgian, British, Dutch, French and German soldiers died, and the French air force, the Luftwaffe and the RAF lost well over 3,000 aircraft.

This is a compelling and fresh retelling of one of the century's most intriguing and significant campaigns. H

Ashley Jackson is a professor of history at King's College London

their husbands, particularly in her chapters on the First World War. This is perhaps understandable: primary sources written by women are scarce. There is also the conundrum that writing about soldiers' wives during periods of mass conscription can easily slide into a history of married women in general – an impossible task in one volume.

Gillies' book is best when she focuses on individual women. She is exquisitely sensitive to the emotional lives of soldiers' wives and she demonstrates that, although their experiences have varied greatly over the centuries, the difficulties they face are remarkably similar. H

Joanna Bourke is professor of history at Birkbeck, University of London

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The folly of youth?

THOMAS ASBRIDGE *commends a biography of a figure who has often been relegated to the margins of medieval history*

Henry the Young King, 1155-1183
by Matthew Strickland
Yale University Press, 416 pages, £30



This year marks the 800th anniversary of Henry III's accession to the English throne – but it is often forgotten that another figure had been proclaimed as Henry III almost 50 years earlier. The eldest surviving son of Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine, this Henry – known as the Young King – stood to inherit both the realm of England and a swathe of territory covering much of modern-day France: a vast domain sometimes described as the Angevin empire.

In spite of his startling pedigree and glittering prospects, Young Henry's short life came to a grim end in 1183 when he succumbed to a bout of dysentery, aged just 28. The Young King's achievements were soon overshadowed by those of his more (in)famous brothers: Richard the Lionheart and King John. As a result, chroniclers pushed Henry to the margins of history – little more than a footnote in the story of medieval England.

Matthew Strickland's splendid book offers an insightful reassessment of Henry's career, while also opening a fresh window onto the world of the Angevin dynasty – perhaps the most fascinating (and dysfunctional) family of the Middle Ages. Until now, scholars have been content to brand Henry an indolent playboy. Making the most of the surviving evidence, Strickland overturns this view by reconstructing the world of the later 12th century from the boy king's perspective in order to understand the pressures, ambitions and disappointments that shaped his behaviour.

Much of the book is devoted to a detailed narrative and analysis of Young Henry's two rebellions against his father, with Strickland arguing convincingly that Henry II should shoulder some of the blame, given his stubborn refusal to share power. Towards the end of his life, the Young King also dedicated much of his energy to the pursuit of victory and renown in knightly tournaments. Strickland rightly discards the view that this was idle folly, observing that, due to medieval Europe's deepening obsession with chivalry, tournament success gave Henry some real political influence.

Strickland's deeply researched, richly textured work will be of enormous value to specialists, while general readers will also find much to enjoy in a commendably lucid and entertaining book. H

Thomas Asbridge is reader in medieval history at Queen Mary University of London



Henry the Young King's 1170 coronation, as shown in a 13th-century illustration

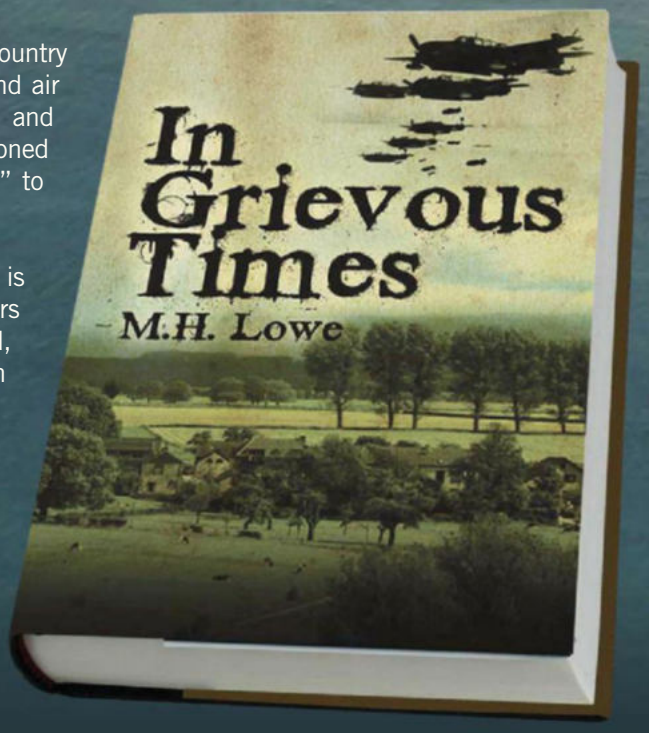
Murder, when our backs were to the wall and the Nazis on our doorstep.

M. H. Lowe's *In Grievous Times* takes the reader to the heart of English country village life at a turning point in Britain's history: the era of evacuees and air raids, sudden death from the skies and the expectation for every man and woman to do their patriotic duty. When Clement, a country vicar, is summoned to London by an old friend to be involved in a covert "suicide mission" to thwart the impending German invasion, his world changes forever.

Priorities shift and every aspect of his life is called into question as he is forced to make choices that affect a great many lives. And when members of his secret, carefully-chosen team are one by one discovered dead, Clement finds himself at the centre of a far more complex situation than he had realised...

The drama and intrigue of *In Grievous Times*, played out against a seemingly innocent rustic backdrop with superb characterisation, keep the reader hungry throughout for the next piece of the puzzle.
A riveting read.

Available from Waterstones and online book sellers.



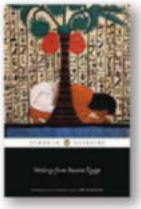
"A marvellous read … rich in atmosphere and memorable characters. The well-crafted plot twists and turns, growing ever more sinister until its gripping and unexpected conclusion. A wartime puzzle that's highly recommended." Rupert Taylor, Eastbourne Herald

PAPERBACKS

Writings from Ancient Egypt

by Toby Wilkinson

Penguin Classics, 384 pages, £10.99



Writing developed in Egypt around 3100 BC. As we might expect from a civilisation whose culture is disproportionately preserved in its cemeteries, the earliest surviving texts are bureaucratic lists dealing with funerary rituals. Soon this dull repertoire expanded to include tomb autobiographies and prayers for the dead.

Next came didactic (or teaching) texts, with the first fiction emerging during the Middle Kingdom. The New Kingdom, a period in which no more than 10 per cent of the population was literate, provided an eclectic supply of writings, ranging from court cases scribbled on limestone to monumental inscriptions carved on temple walls and love poetry written on papyrus.

This rich legacy was lost following the introduction of first Christianity and then Islam to Egypt, when both the hieroglyphic writing and the Egyptian language were forgotten. It was not until 1822, when the French scholar Jean-François Champollion decoded the hieroglyphic script, that the world was again able to read the words of the ancient scribes: "Man perishes, his corpse turns to dust… but writings make him remembered."

Toby Wilkinson's anthology is unashamedly aimed at the general reader rather than the student or scholar. He provides competent translations of representative texts arranged thematically, with explanatory notes to help the reader. Because his book covers more than 2,000 years of writings, he has had to be highly selective: there are old favourites here alongside some less familiar works, as well as some omissions that are, perhaps, surprising. Nevertheless, his book makes a very useful introduction to the complexities of ancient Egyptian literature in its many forms.

Joyce Tyldesley teaches Egyptology at the University of Manchester



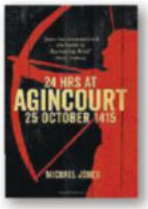
A tomb wall painting of c1350 BC depicting an Egyptian hunting wildfowl. As Joyce Tyldesley observes, ancient Egypt was "a civilisation whose culture is disproportionately preserved in its cemeteries"

AKG-IMAGES

24 Hours at Agincourt: 25 October 1415

by Michael Jones

WH Allen, 352 pages, £9.99



With his contribution to a series of books each detailing the action on a single day of battle (including Waterloo and the Somme), Michael Jones immediately faces a major challenge for Agincourt: unlike more modern engagements, it is highly problematic to reconstruct even the outline of a medieval battle, let alone a meticulous study of the 24 hours surrounding it. Despite this, Jones succeeds admirably in presenting an absorbing and thorough account of this most iconic of medieval engagements. He is helped by the fact that Agincourt was arguably the best-recorded military encounter of the Middle Ages.

On 25 October 1415, Henry V and his "band of brothers" – nobles, knights, men-at-arms and, especially, archers – spectacularly and ruthlessly defeated a larger French army, its ranks comprising the elite of French chivalry. How much bigger the French force was is the subject of much academic debate. Revisionist historians opt for about 12,000 French versus 8,000–9,000 English, while Jones opts for a more traditional estimate of a 'notional' 28,000 French versus 7,000 English.

Jones also upholds the traditional view that English professionalism and discipline won the day against the disorganised and unimpressive nobility of France. Controversial, however, is his original and interesting assertion that Henry's battle plan was based on hunting practices. This is an engaging, accessible and authoritative account of the dramatic events that day.

Sean McGlynn is a lecturer in history at Plymouth University, based at Strode College, Somerset

Karl Doenitz and the Last Days of the Third Reich

by Barry Turner

Icon Books, 320 pages, £8.99



Karl Doenitz, grand admiral of the German navy and Hitler's unlikely successor as head of state of the Nazi Reich, is an interesting figure. Largely overlooked by popular histories, particularly in his short-lived capacity as president, he was instrumental in developing the German U-boat arm and in overseeing the little-known Operation Hannibal, the mass evacuation of German civilians and military from eastern territories through the Baltic in the spring of 1945.

These aspects make any new study of Doenitz's role in 1945 welcome, and Barry Turner's book is a well-written addition to a relatively thin area of study. Sadly, it cannot be considered the last word. Turner relies almost exclusively on English-language and secondary sources, even though the best available work on Doenitz and Operation Hannibal is in German. Moreover, this book is presented – admittedly rather half-heartedly – as a rehabilitation of the admiral. That suggestion can scarcely be justified.

Roger Moorhouse is the author of *The Devils' Alliance: Hitler's Pact with Stalin* (Bodley Head, 2014)



Charles II lands at Dover, 1660. Plotters for the king's restoration, religious fanatics, child abductions and murder are all in the mix of SG MacLean's novel

FICTION

Monastery mystery

NICK RENNISON *enjoys a tension-filled tale that again sees Damian Seeker sniffing out trouble in Cromwellian London*

The Black Friar
By SG MacLean
Quercus, 432 pages, £13.99



In the heart of the ancient Blackfriars monastery, largely abandoned since the time of Henry VIII, stonemasons make a grisly discovery. Behind a brick wall, they find the body of a man dressed in the black robe once worn by the monks. This is not an old corpse, however, but a recent one and it is clear that the man was entombed in the building alive.

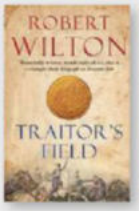
The year is 1655 and England is ruled by Oliver Cromwell as lord protector. Damian Seeker, captain of Cromwell's Guard and a figure feared throughout London, is asked to identify the man and investigate his death. When the body is revealed to be that of one of the protectorate's secret agents, working undercover to expose those conspiring against the regime, Seeker's task becomes much more urgent. Meanwhile, children are disappearing, mysteriously snatched from the city streets, royalist conspirators plot the return of Charles II and the religious fanatics known as the Fifth Monarchists, who expect the imminent return of Jesus Christ, are planning an uprising from their base in Aldgate.

The first of SG MacLean's novels about Damian Seeker won the Crime Writers' Association Historical Dagger for 2015 and her sequel to it is just as entertaining. Seeker is a complex and fascinating character. Ruthless in pursuit of those who threaten the hard-won stability of the new government, he is yet a man of wide sympathies and hidden tenderness. The London in which he operates is convincingly portrayed as a hotbed of dissent and possible sedition. Real historical characters such as Cromwell's spymaster John Thurloe, the poet Andrew Marvell and a young civil servant with a taste for drink and women, named Samuel Pepys, flit through the pages of what proves an absorbing, enjoyable tale. H

Nick Rennison is the author of *Carver's Truth* (Corvus, 2016)

THREE MORE TALES OF CROMWELL'S ENGLAND

Traitor's Field
Robert Wilton (2013)



In 1648, as the Civil War draws to an end, the opposing intelligence services of the king and Cromwell prepare for a final battle in which the stakes could not be higher. And the true power in the land is Robert Wilton's ingenious invention, the Comptrollerate-General for Scrutiny and Survey, an espionage organisation designed to survive all the temporary vicissitudes of the times. This is a clever, cunningly plotted exercise in historical spy fiction.

The Royalist
SJ Deas (2014)



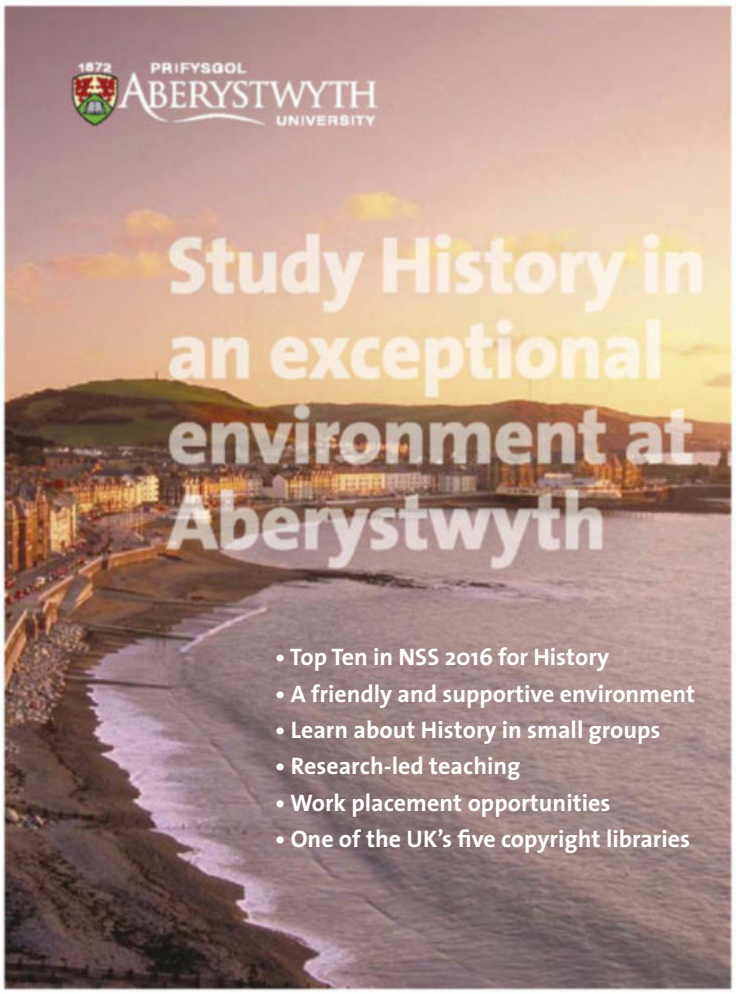
Royalist soldier William Falkland is awaiting execution. And yet, when he is led from his Newgate cell, it is not to the gallows but to a rendezvous with Oliver Cromwell. In Deas's atmospheric thriller, the most powerful man in England has need of Falkland's skills as an investigator. If the royalist can discover the reasons behind a series of mysterious deaths in the New Model Army wintering in Devon, he may be able to save his own life.

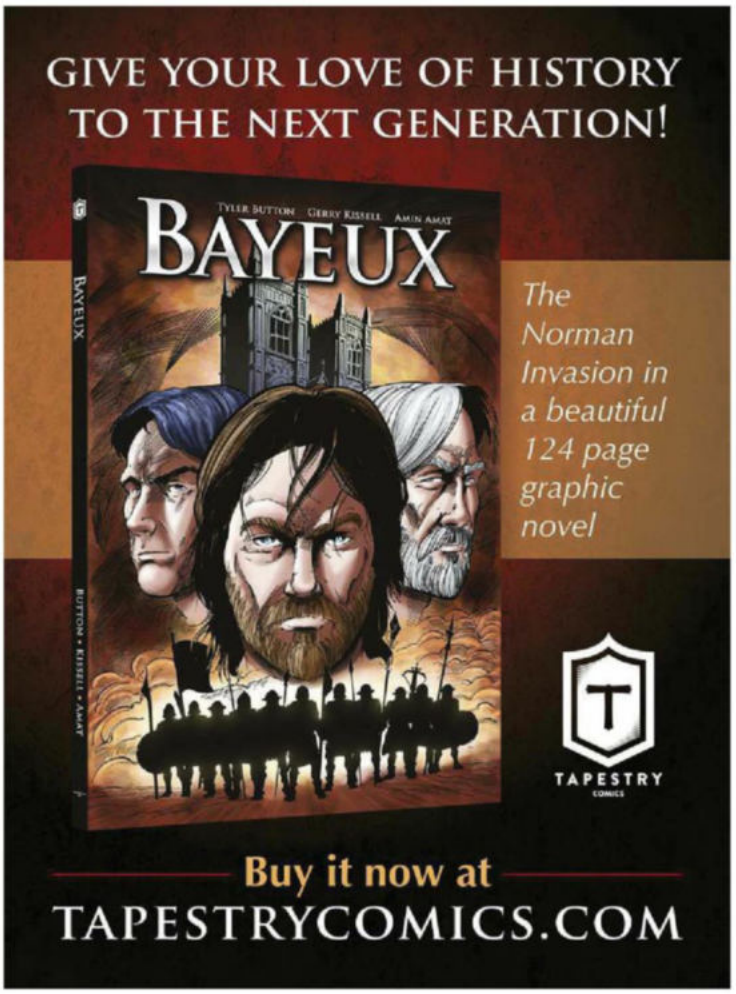
A Cruel Necessity
LC Tyler (2014)

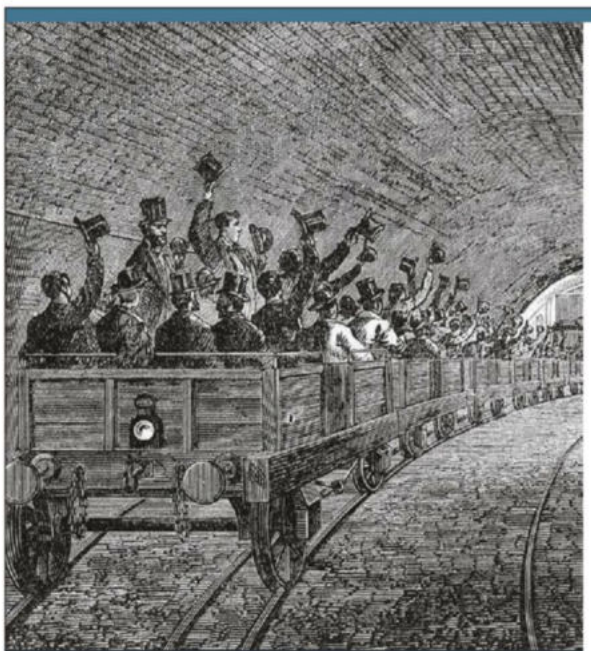


John Grey, a lawyer without any clients, is drawn into a web of intrigue when he decides to investigate the death of a man who may well have been one of the multitude of royalist spies who are still operating in England in the latter years of Cromwell's rule. In the first of a promised series of John Grey crime novels set in the 1650s, LC Tyler creates a satisfyingly convoluted mystery and an engaging protagonist.

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BBC One is showing a new adaptation of a Wilkie Collins (right) classic

Jonathan Wright previews the pick of upcoming programmes

TV&RADIO

Daytime gem

The Moonstone

TV BBC One
scheduled from Monday 31 October

Described by TS Eliot as "the first, the longest and the best of modern English detective novels", Wilkie Collins' 1868 mystery has entranced generations of readers – and is now dramatised in five consecutive weekday afternoon episodes as part of the BBC's #LovetoRead season. John Thomson (*Cold Feet, The Fast Show*) heads the cast as clever Sergeant Cuff, based on Scotland Yard detective Jonathan 'Jack' Whicher (1814–81), while Sarah Hadland (*Miranda*) plays appalling busybody Miss Drusilla Clack. The plot revolves around the disappearance of a valuable diamond, and dastardly deeds related to British rule in India.



Secrets of Great British Castles **visits some of the UK's key bastions**

Fort processes

Secrets of Great British Castles

TV Channel 5
scheduled for October

Historian Dan Jones returns with a second series of the show that traces the stories of some of the nation's most significant fortifications, with the help of aerial footage and historical reconstructions. He explores Edinburgh Castle, so central to the history of Scotland and its monarchs; Cardiff Castle and its tunnels that sheltered civilians during the darkest days of the Blitz; and York Castle, which in 1190 witnessed one of the most horrific pogroms in English history – a wave of anti-Semitic riots that culminated in the massacre of an estimated 150 Jewish people.

GETTY IMAGES/SIDELINE PRODUCTIONS

Broadcast news

HISTORY MAGAZINE CHOICE

BBC historian Robert Seatter tells us about a reworking of its 'Ealing-esque' first live television broadcast

Television's Opening Night: How the Box Was Born

TV BBC Four
scheduled for Wednesday 2 November

The first official live BBC television broadcast was made from Alexandra Palace on 2 November 1936, when viewers were served, says Robert Seatter, head of BBC History, "an extraordinary cocktail that created the grammar of television".

No footage of the evening's entertainment has survived, but that's all the more reason to welcome a one-off attempt to recreate the show, fronted by Dallas Campbell, Professor Danielle George and Dr Hugh Hunt. It was, recalls Seatter, a suitably "Ealing-esque" evening.

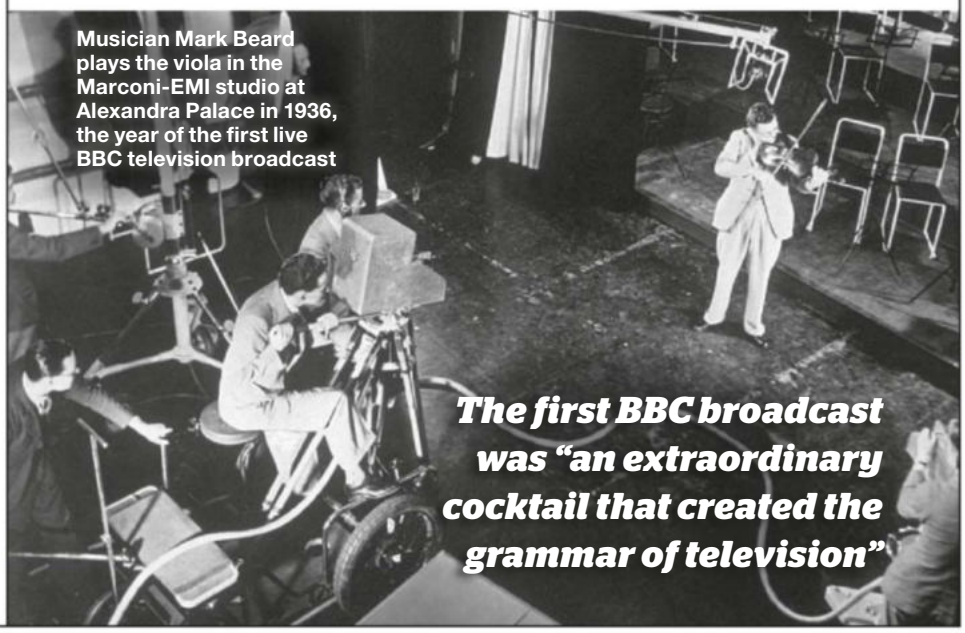
"What the film does convey brilliantly is that race against time – the adrenaline rush of putting a show on air," he says. "That's common today – there's always something that can go wrong – but what's even more marked here is that they're making it up as they go along."

Things were particularly complicated on that historic night 80 years ago because the BBC was at the time testing out two systems: a 'mechanical television' system developed by John Logie Baird and the Marconi-EMI 'electronic system'. Baird's system, Dallas Campbell learns at first hand, required presenters to sit "rigidly still" in a "very hot box" while wearing blue make-up to help define their features. There was no autocue, so lines had to be memorised, and presenters were prodded in the back with a stick when filming cut to another camera.

Why did the BBC bother? On top of the technical challenges, radio was still quite new and early TV sets cost a year's wages. Also, the famously stone-faced Lord Reith, first director-general of the BBC, loathed television, which he saw as "brash and populist and vulgar".

One answer lies in the geopolitical situation of the time. Auntie was being pressured by authorities concerned about the rise of Nazism and Hitler's use of propaganda, says Seatter: "Germany had evolved television in what were called viewing parlours, so [the authorities] could see it had a political importance and the BBC was really forced into it."

Without that pressure, the birth of television would have been very different. For more on the history of the BBC, go to: *bbc.co.uk/historyofthebbc*



Musician Mark Beard plays the viola in the Marconi-EMI studio at Alexandra Palace in 1936, the year of the first live BBC television broadcast

The first BBC broadcast was "an extraordinary cocktail that created the grammar of television"



MP Ellen Wilkinson heads the marchers walking from Jarrow to London to highlight poverty in the North East

A long march

Ramblings
Radio BBC Radio 4
scheduled for Thursday 6 October

Eighty years ago, a group of around 200 men set out from Jarrow in south Tyneside to walk to London. The Jarrow March aimed to highlight the unemployment and poverty that followed the closure in 1934 of Palmer's Shipyard, the town's main employer.

For Radio 4's *Ramblings* series, Clare Balding retraces part of the route of a protest that historian AJP Taylor said "displayed the failure of capitalism in a way that mere figures or literary description could not".

Balding's companions on her hike include Robert Colls, professor of cultural history at De Montfort University, who discusses the role of marching in modern politics. Helen Antrobus from the People's Museum in Manchester tells the story of the only woman on the march, Jarrow's Labour MP, Ellen Wilkinson, who went on to be minister of education in Clement Attlee's reforming government. Also walking is Margaret Laurenson, a local hiker who devised the route taken by the quartet.

The show also features an archive recording made in the Yorkshire town of Harrogate, where the marchers were greeted warmly and given food by the local Rotary Club.

Royal ascent

Victoria
DVD (ITV Studios Global Entertainment, £15.99)

It's 1837 and, for teenager Alexandrina, it's time to set aside childish things. Except, as this drama about the early years of the reign of Victoria (Jenna Coleman) suggests, when she becomes queen she isn't a grown-up but rather a difficult kidult combination of wilful adolescent and haughty aristocrat.

Retaining a naïvety born of a sheltered, even claustrophobic upbringing, Victoria faces a host of troubles. Luckily, wise old statesman Lord Melbourne (Rufus Sewell) is around to help – prompting hints of a potential May-to-September romance.

How much of this is historically accurate is largely irrelevant: *Victoria* is a mainstream drama initially broadcast by ITV in the Sunday evening slot formerly dominated by *Downton Abbey*. There are other parallels with Julian Fellowes' crowd-pleaser in the big budget and the below-stairs storylines. But despite the gilded world of *Victoria*, it comes across as less conservative than *Downton* – perhaps because Victoria constantly kicks against attempts to control her by pointing out that, after all, she's the queen. Hugely entertaining, and available as a two-disc set with plenty of behind-the-scenes extras.



Jenna Coleman plays the young Victoria, alongside Rufus Sewell as Lord Melbourne

ALSO LOOK OUT FOR...



An androgynous Boy George in the 1982 heyday of Culture Club

The latest clutch of mentaries in the BBC's My Generation season focuses on the years between 1976 and 1985, which musically encompassed punk, post-punk, disco, the ska revival and new romanticism. The centrepiece is **Boy George's 1970s: Save Me from Suburbia** (BBC Two, Saturday 8 October), in which the singer looks back at 1982 and the 'is-it-a-boy-or-a-girl?' furore that followed Culture Club's first appearance on *Top of the Pops*, and considers how he was shaped by the 197 . In **The People's History of Pop** (BBC Four, Friday 7 October), The Selecter's Pauline Black hears Britons' experiences of being music fans. In **Skinhead** (BBC Four, Friday 14 October), filmmaker Don Letts charts the story of a youth movement that's often lazily equated only with right-wing violence, but which had its roots in a ltural collision between young white working-class kids and their Jamaican counterparts in Britain's inner cities.

On BBC One Scotland and available via iPlayer, **Scotch: The Story of Whisky** (Tuesday 11 October) sees presenter and actor David Hayman tracing the history of Scotland's most famous drink.

For the series **Britain's Black Past** (BBC Radio 4, October), Professor Gretchen Gerzina explores the lives of black people who settled in Britain in the 18th and early 19th centuries, and the paradox that, while the country remained integral to the slave trade, many black people were able to live in Britain in freedom and prosperity.

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HISTORY EXPLORER

Neolithic Britons

Spencer Mizen visits **Avebury, Wiltshire**, in the company of Jim Leary, to investigate two of the British Isles' most enigmatic Stone Age monuments

I usually start my week sat at an office desk in the heart of a busy city. Not today. This morning I find myself in the middle of a field, admiring the largest man-made mound in Europe, one that has adorned the Wiltshire countryside for 4,500 years. I'm craving coffee, my feet are soggy and it looks like it might rain. But, as Monday mornings go, a visit to Silbury Hill takes some beating.

Rising 31 metres into the sky, Silbury Hill is a seriously impressive piece of engineering, one of the most enigmatic of all the edifices left to us by Britain's Stone Age inhabitants. But, better still, it is just one jewel in a treasure trove of Neolithic (literally meaning 'New Stone Age') monuments clustered around the Wiltshire village of Avebury – and, on this particular Monday morning, I'm getting a guided tour.

Dollop of guesswork

If I find myself wondering how on earth Silbury Hill got here, then I'm far from alone. It seems that people have been coming here to ponder its provenance since the arrival of the Romans 2,000 years ago. The first tourists could only employ their imaginations – and a healthy dollop of guesswork – to try to solve Silbury's riddle. I, on the other hand, have Dr Jim Leary, director of the Archaeological Field School at the University of Reading, to help me get to the bottom of its mysteries.

"In some ways you can compare Silbury to the early Egyptian pyramids," says Jim. "It is roughly contemporary and it is of a comparable height and volume."

But there the comparisons end. While the pyramids were grand statements designed to achieve maximum impact, Silbury is a lot more self-effacing. "Sure, it's big," says Jim. "In fact, if you plonked it in the middle of Trafalgar Square it would reach three-quarters of the way up Nelson's Column. But come and look at the place and you'll soon notice that it's surrounded by hills, almost hidden in the countryside. Whoever built Silbury wasn't trying to achieve shock and awe."

And whoever built Silbury didn't do so in one go, throwing it up in a few short months before sitting back and admiring their work.

"Excavations have revealed that building Silbury was a process," says Jim. "It contains lots of layers, and these were added, little and often, over many, many years. And that's reflected in what's contained within the hill. There are no grandiose burials of high-status individuals here, as is the case with the pyramids. Instead, the people who built this place seem to have deposited everyday items here such as stone and antlers."

But why? To answer this question, Jim and I leave Silbury Hill behind and make the 10-minute walk to a site that's of equal importance to historians of Neolithic Britain – Avebury henge monument (henges are circular areas enclosed by a bank or ditch, often featuring standing stones). Approaching the henge along an ancient avenue flanked by enormous sarsen megaliths is amazing enough in itself. Yet, when you reach the henge, a huge earthen bank containing three stone circles, it becomes more evident still why the 17th-century antiquarian John Aubrey described Avebury as a cathedral to Stonehenge's parish church.

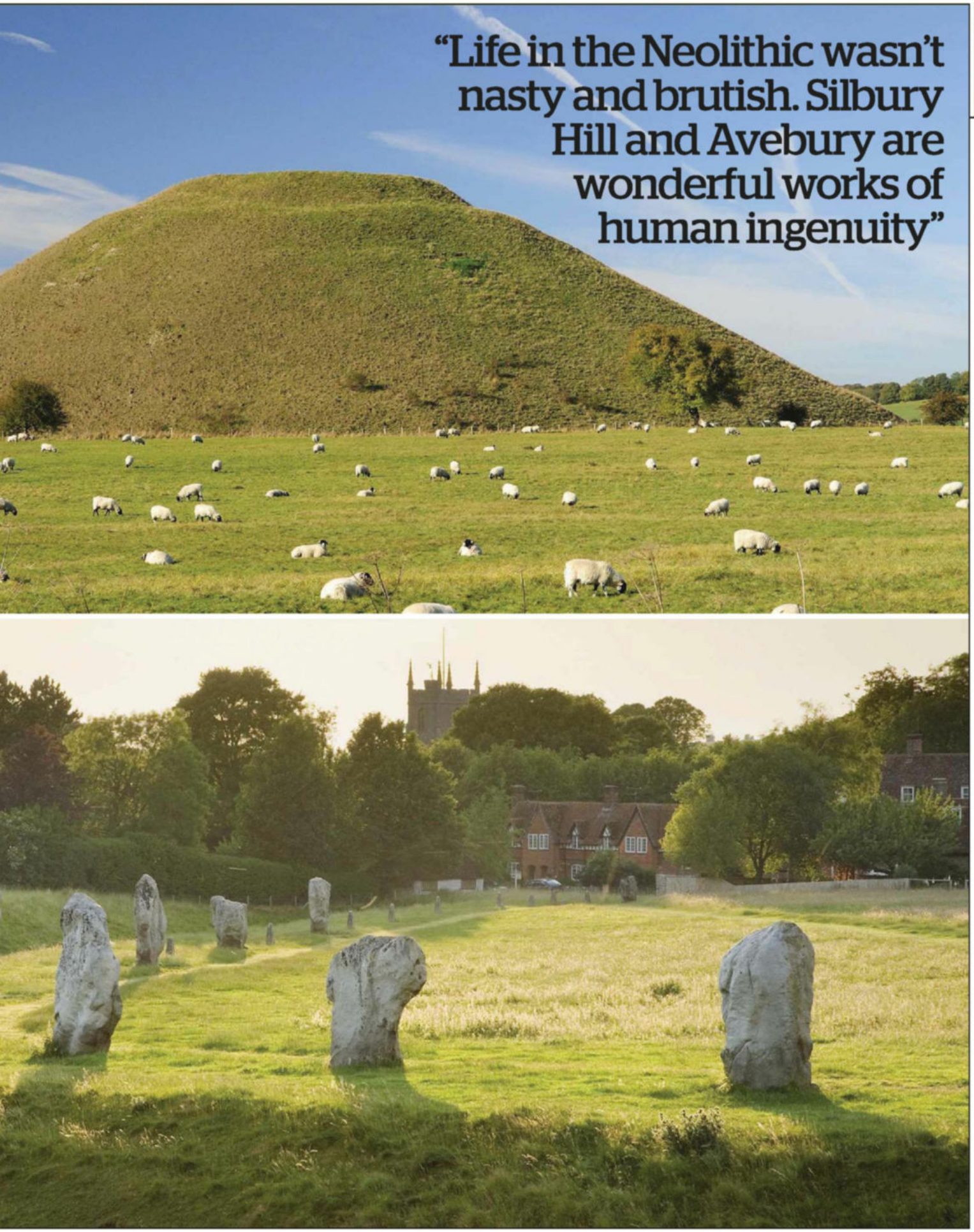
"We are now looking at the largest stone circle in the world," says Jim, as we stand atop the henge looking down at the sarsen megaliths. "We think that it was constructed at about the same time as Silbury, about 2,500 BC – and that the massive bank and ditch possibly predate the stones. As to why





GETTY IMAGES

TOP: Silbury Hill, the largest man-made mound in Europe, was constructed around 4,500 years ago
ABOVE: Was Avebury's henge built to protect people on the outside from something evil within?


"Life in the Neolithic wasn't nasty and brutish. Silbury Hill and Avebury are wonderful works of human ingenuity"



The sarsen stone-flanked West Kennet Avenue. Jim Leary believes that "this may have been the route along which people ceremonially processed to Avebury henge"

it's here, we have to employ some educated guesswork."

Avebury henge clearly wasn't built for defensive purposes. If the intention was to repel external aggressors, the ditch would have been on the *outside* of the henge, whereas here it is on the inside. There's clearly something else going on entirely.

"One theory has it that it was built to welcome outsiders in – the exact opposite, as it were, of the traditional defensive ditch," says Jim. "Another, slightly more sinister theory proposes that it was actually designed to defend people outside from something dangerous or powerful on the *inside* of the henge. We'll probably never know the true reason for these stones' existence – but it seems likely they had a spiritual purpose."

Massive undertaking

Whatever the reason the Neolithic inhabitants of Avebury chose to build the henge, there's one thing we can be sure of: it was one hell of an undertaking.

"The stones here are absolutely massive – the largest must be almost 100 tonnes," says Jim. "Many of them would have lain underground, so the people here would have had to probe them, excavate them and move them into position. The level of engineering required to achieve that was extraordinary." And that achievement speaks volumes for the complexity of the society that produced Avebury henge. "If ever you needed proof th life in the Neolithic *wasn't* nasty and brutish, come to Avebury," says Jim. "The henge is a wonderful work of human ingenuity – one that would tax even modern people. Whoever produced it were clearly capable of complex geometric artwork laden with symbolism. Sure, they had different belief systems and technologies at their disposal, but in many ways they were very similar to you and me."

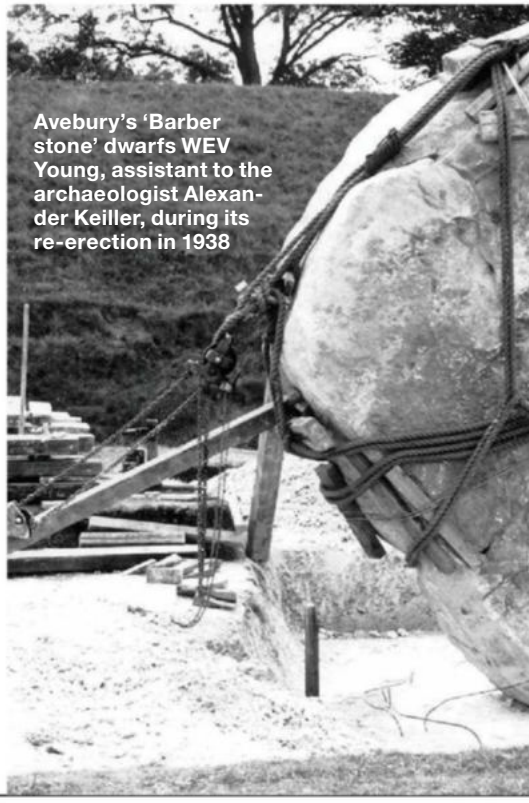
But what led these people to produce monuments such as those at Avebury and Silbury when, as far as we know, they'd never done so before? To answer this question, we have to rewind the clock 1,500 years to 4,000 BC and the dawn of the Neolithic era in the British Isles. It was around this point that the residents of these islands forsook millennia of hunting and gathering and adopted farming and sedentary living.

"We're still not entirely sure why Britons suddenly turned to agriculture," says Jim. "Farming is a far more work-intensive way of life. Instead of moving around taking advantage of the environment's larder, your whole existence is dependent on what one area can – or cannot – provide. In some ways, it was a counterintuitive move."

Counterintuitive or not, the transition to farming utterly transformed the way Britons lived. By the end of the Neolithic, they were expert woodworkers, and employed tools such as antler picks and modified cows' shoulder blades as shovels. They were eating domesticated cows and pigs – Jim says there is evidence for some communities feasting on two dozen pigs in one sitting. And, last but not least, they had developed a very strong connection to their surroundings.

That sense of 'place' could well be the key to the construction of Silbury and Avebury in the third millennia BC. Containing not just these two sites but also West Kennet Long Barrow (a Neolithic chambered tomb) and Stonehenge, these few square miles in Wiltshire are to Neolithic monuments what Rome and Athens are to classical architecture. Neolithic Britons evidently attached great significance to this particular area and, says Jim, whatever it was may have flowed from Wiltshire's water.

"There's a congregation of rivers and springs in this area – you've got, for example, the nearby Swallowhead Springs forming the start of the river Kennet, which is itself fed by a winterbourne (a stream that dries up in summer) running through Avebury. Further downstream, people were depositing items such as axes in these waters from at least the Middle Stone Age – and the best explanation we've got for them doing so is



Avebury's 'Barber stone' dwarfs WEV Young, assistant to the archaeologist Alexander Keiller, during its re-erection in 1938

GETTY IMAGES/TOPFOTO

"THE LEVEL OF ENGINEERING REQUIRED TO MOVE THE STONES – THE LARGEST OF WHICH MUST BE 100 TONNES – WAS EXTRAORDINARY"

that they attributed some sort of spiritual significance to them."

And that spiritual significance, says Jim, may well have extended to the sarsen stones themselves. "In the Neolithic, this area would have been littered with sarsens. The early antiquarians described how you could walk from one settlement to another on such stones without touching the ground. Those stones would have provided the huge trilithons found at Stonehenge, and we've also found them in the core of Silbury Hill. I think there's every reason to believe that our ancestors regarded them as sacred."

The end of an era

We don't know how many people lived in the Avebury area in the Neolithic, nor can we be sure how much communication they had with other residents of the British Isles, though the fact that there are other henges dotted around the British Isles suggests that there was probably some.

What we do know is that around the time that the monuments at Avebury and Silbury appeared, the Neolithic was coming to an end. This period witnessed the rise of the Bell-Beakers, a cultural group (originating from continental Europe) who produced elaborate pottery vessels that they buried in their graves. As Britain's first metal-workers, they ushered in the Bronze Age.

ALAMY



Soon after, it appears that Avebury was abandoned and may well have remained so for centuries. All that changed during the Roman occupation of Britain, when a Roman road and a cluster of buildings (possibly including a temple) appeared in the area.

But while the Romans ushered in a brief revival for Avebury, its fortunes were to take a plunge in the Middle Ages.

"In the 14th century, Avebury's stones were subjected to a sustained attack," says Jim. "Many of them were pulled down, broken up and used as material in buildings. The destruction has often been framed as an act of Christian vandalism against ancient symbols of paganism. I suspect, however, that the motivation might have been more prosaic. In an era when the price of wool was booming, people needed the land on which the stones stood to graze their sheep. They may have pulled the stones down for no other reason than they got in the way."

Whatever the reason, the stones' future hung in the balance until the 20th century when archaeologist Alexander Keiller – the heir to a mighty marmalade business – set about restoring them to their former glories. In that, he more than succeeded. Today, 350,000 visitors make the pilgrimage to Avebury stones and henge each year. It's a fitting tribute to what is, alongside Silbury Hill, one of the most remarkable and enduringly enigmatic monuments in the British Isles.



Jim Leary (left) is director of the Archaeological Field School at the University of Reading.
Words: Spencer Mizen

VISIT

Avebury and Silbury Hill



Near Marlborough, Wiltshire
● *english-heritage.org.uk*

NEOLITHIC BRITONS: FIVE MORE PLACES TO EXPLORE

1 Heart of Neolithic Orkney

ORKNEY ISLANDS, SCOTLAND

Where Neolithic buildings reside

This World Heritage Site includes the large, chambered tomb of Maeshowe, the impressive stone circles of the Stones of Stenness and the Ring of Brodgar, and the extraordinarily well-preserved settlement of Skara Brae. Ongoing excavations on the Ness of Brodgar have unearthed a further set of late Neolithic stone buildings.
whc.unesco.org/en/list/514

2 Brú na Bóinne

COUNTY MEATH, IRELAND

Where you can view megalithic art

This is another World Heritage Site – a remarkable Neolithic landscape famed for its three large passage tombs: Knowth, Newgrange and Dowth. These monuments house the largest collection of megalithic art in western Europe.
worldheritageireland.ie/bru-na-boinne

3 Grime's Graves Prehistoric Flint Mine

NORFOLK, ENGLAND

Where flint was dug 5,000 years ago

This complex of late Neolithic flint mines extends over a large area of the Breckland landscape. Visitors can descend one of the shafts and see mining galleries and even antler picks lying discarded on the floor.
english-heritage.org.uk

4 Stonehenge

WILTSHIRE, ENGLAND

Where iconic megaliths are sited

This is one of the world's most iconic prehistoric sites, and now has a world-beating new visitor centre complete with reconstructed late Neolithic houses. The key to understanding the stones is the landscape and monuments that surround them.
english-heritage.org.uk

5 Bryn Celli Ddu

ANGLESEY, WALES

Where a tomb is aligned to sunrise

One of the finest megalithic passage tombs in Britain, Bryn Celli Ddu is aligned to the summer solstice sunrise, and has a long passageway leading to a stone chamber. Traces of an earlier henge and possible stone circle can also be seen.
cadw.gov.wales

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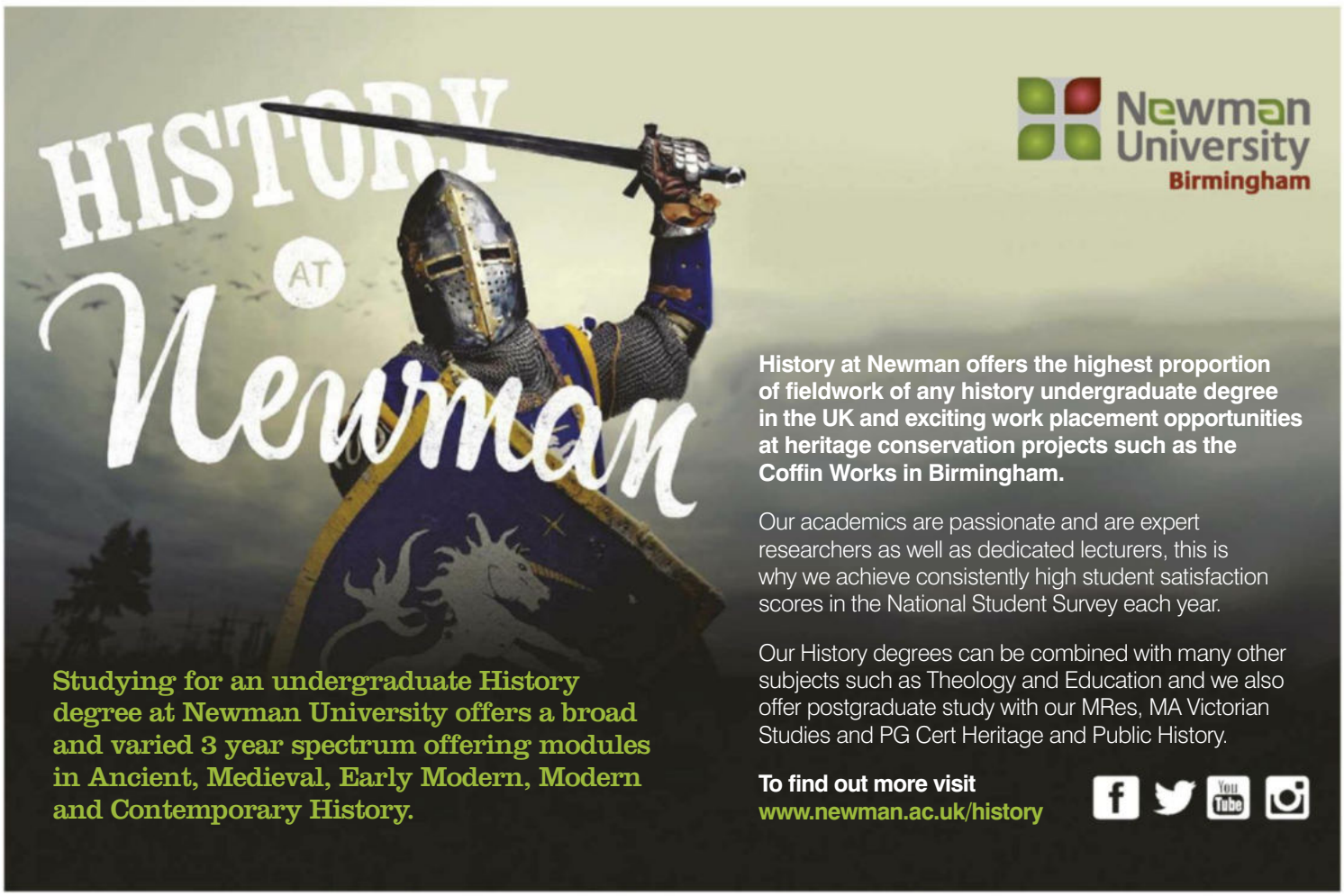


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GUERNSEY POST



FIVE THINGS TO DO IN **NOVEMBER**

Fiji revisited

EXHIBITION

Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific

The Sainsbury Centre for Visual Arts at the University of East Anglia, Norwich
15 October–12 February 2017
☎ 01603 593199
● *scva.ac.uk*

HISTORY MAGAZINE CHOICE



The Pacific island of Fiji has been a locus of cultural interactions from as early as 1000 BC, when canoes carried people to neighbouring islands, continuing to the 19th century when Europeans arrived and Fijians chiefs asked to join the British empire. This exhibition explores the cultural history of the island since the 18th century, and features Fijian artworks as well as European responses to them, with paintings and historic photographs providing context. But the highlights are Fijian artefacts.

"An important aspect of this exhibition is that the many examples of exceptional Fijian creativity on display are not presented as 'ethnographic specimens' or 'illustrations' of Fijian culture," says curator Professor Steven Hooper, "but as works of art in their own right, as worthy of attention as any art tradition in the world."

Exhibits include (clockwise from top left) a man-shaped dish used by a priest when channelling his ancestor in a spirit house; a pedestal dish used for serving *yaqona*, a drink made from the root of a pepper tree, in a traditional ceremony; a whale-ivory goddess image given to the medical officer in Fiji in the 1870s; and a whale-ivory *wasekaseka* or necklace made by craftsmen on neighbouring Tonga, collected by the colonial governor in 1880. With 270 objects on display, this is the largest exhibition about the island ever assembled.

EVENT

BBC History Magazine's History Weekend

Yorkshire Museum and Hospitium, York
18–20 November
☎ 0871 620 4021 (booking line: calls cost 10p per minute plus network extras)
● *historyweekend.com*

Our festival of history returns to York, with a stellar menu of talks at two beautiful venues: the Yorkshire Museum and the 14th-century Hospitium building. The line-up includes more than 20 big names in popular history, such as Tracy Borman, David Olusoga and Michael Wood.



Tracy Borman will be a highlight of our York event

EXHIBITION

Paul Nash

Tate Britain, London
26 October–5 March 2017
☎ 020 7887 8888
● *tate.org.uk*

Although Nash was at the centre of 20th-century British art, his work was influenced by his fascination with the country's ancient past. This exhibition covers Nash's time as a war artist in the world wars, as well as tracing his career from his earliest drawings through to his final visionary landscapes.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Births, Battles and Beheadings

Winchester Discovery Centre
5 November–8 January 2017
☎ 01962 873603
● *hampshireculturaltrust.org.uk*

This exhibition looks at the story of royalty as reflected in Hampshire, focusing on pivotal periods in the county's rich history. From the Iron Age through to the Anglo-Saxons, Tudors and Stuarts, each era is explored with the aid of interactive elements and an array of artefacts.

EXHIBITION / FREE ENTRY

Drawing Attention: Rare Works on Paper 1400–1900

Scottish National Gallery, Edinburgh
Continues to 3 January 2017
☎ 0131 624 6200
● *nationalgalleries.org*

This show, featuring many excellent images that have never before been displayed, spans five centuries of superb draughtsmanship. A number of the works are from little known artists, and were selected for their rarity, beauty and, in some cases, quirkiness. On 12 October there's a tour and talk by a curator (see the website for details).

EMILIE FJOLA SANDY/FIJI MUSEUM/MUSEUM OF ARCHAEOLOGY & ANTHROPOLOGY, CAMBRIDGE/KINGS MUSEUM ABERDEEN

MY FAVOURITE PLACE

The Belgian coast



by Kathryn Ferry

For the latest in our historical holidays series, Kathryn describes the delights of Belgium's seaside resorts

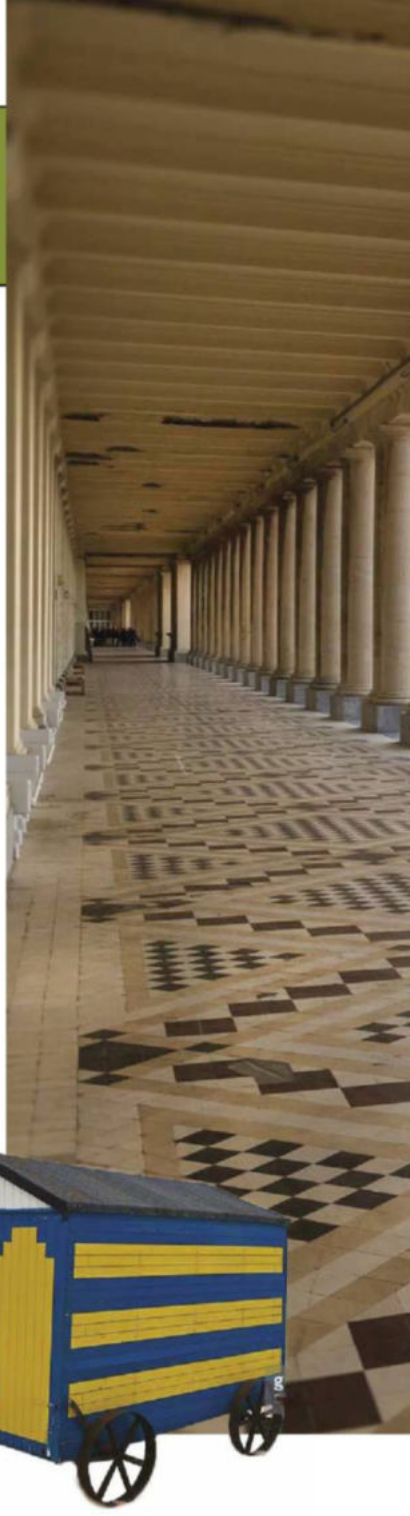
In August 1863, the famous Victorian theologian John Henry Newman was holidaying at Ostend when he passed Leopold I, King of the Belgians, enjoying a stroll along the wide beach. Thanks to his patronage, and that of his son Leopold II, Ostend was undergoing a transformation in the 19th century into one of Europe's most cosmopolitan watering places. Newman noted the throng of elite visitors but, as a celebrity at home, found he was able to go about incognito as there were so few English people among them. Even now, despite the development of Belgium's seaside resorts, their wartime history, wonderful seafood and easy accessibility, British visitors remain in the minority.

As a seaside historian, it was high on my list and one of the joys of the coast is that you can see its entire length by hopping on and off the Kusttram (coast tram). From De Panne in the west to Knokke-Heist in the east is a mere 45 miles. Behind the splendid golden sands, nature reserves break up the urban backdrop of seaside apartment blocks. During the Belle Époque of the late 19th century, when Ostend was summer home to European high society and new resorts either side were striving to catch up, the promenade was a mix of grand hotels and villas. It's fun to spot the remnants of this era sandwiched between new buildings, not least because the juxtaposition of old and new tells its own story of a coastline dedicated to pleasure that has twice been on the frontline of global conflict.

At Ostend we hired a family cycle for four and joined other holidaymakers pedalling their way along the promenade. A massive feature of it is the Royal Galleries, a neoclassical arcade built from 1902–06 to keep King Leopold II warm and dry on the walk between his royal villa and newly built horse racing track. The structure was later walled off as part of Hitler's Atlantic Wall during the German occupation. West of Ostend, the elaborate measures taken to prevent an Allied invasion can be explored at Domein Raversijde, where gun emplacements, trenches and other features are preserved as an open-air museum.

At Nieuwpoort, a memorial museum commemorates the opening of the sluice gates to flood the hinterland and stop German troops advancing to the coast in 1914 during the First World War. From the point of invasion, Belgians began fleeing their homes and between September 1914 and March 1915 tens of thousands of refugees arrived in Ostend. Most would find shelter in Britain. As they waited to leave, bathing machines became their temporary homes. None of these peculiar little seaside vehicles are left in operation but I was ludicrously pleased to find their modern successors dotting the sands at De Panne. Seeing the wheeled beach huts now used to store parasols and sun loungers is like glimpsing a colourful mise-en-scène from the Victorian seaside.

Two other highlights are the house museum of Villa les Zephyrs at Westende-bad and the fin-de-siècle village of De Haan. The former is a recreation of a rich family's holiday home in 1930, with beautiful decoration – and an enviable walk-in marble bath. De Haan was favoured by Albert Einstein and

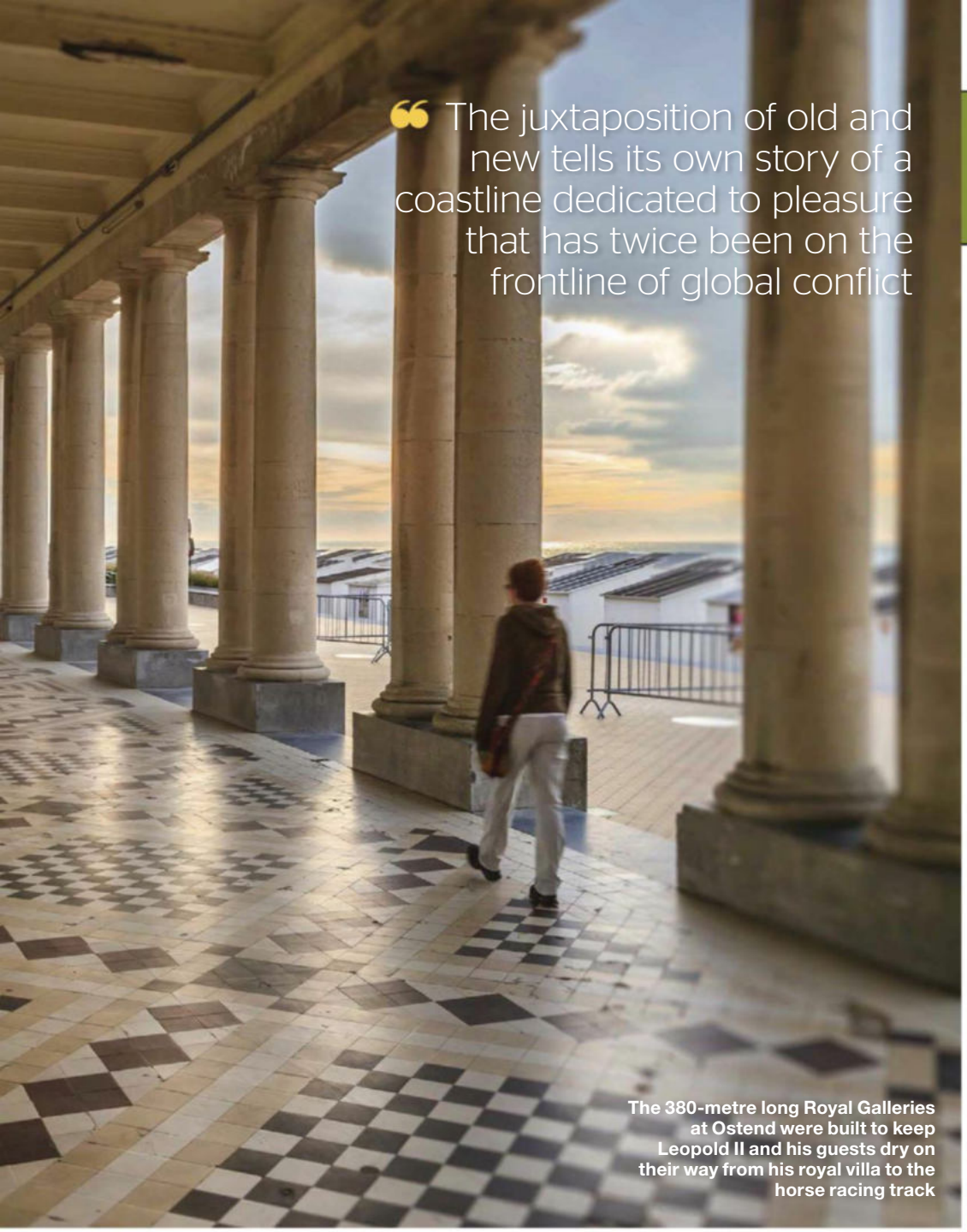


A modern wheeled beach hut at De Panne is reminiscent of earlier bathing machines



Ostend, on the Belgian coast, pictured during the Belle Époque when Europe's high society flocked to the resort

GETTY IMAGES/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



> The juxtaposition of old and new tells its own story of a coastline dedicated to pleasure that has twice been on the frontline of global conflict

The 380-metre long Royal Galleries at Ostend were built to keep Leopold II and his guests dry on their way from his royal villa to the horse racing track

the attractive tram station there gives a flavour of the holiday retreats that make up a sort of garden suburb between it and the sea. I managed to get lost among the green avenues ornamented with thatched villas, but it was really no hardship and there was a particularly good ice cream parlour near the tram stop when it finally reappeared.

Finding tasty food is never a problem on the Belgian coast, be it waffles or seafood from a stall, cafe or restaurant. The tourist board has a campaign to encourage the use of less familiar fish, so there are ample opportunities to try something new. And perhaps that is a good metaphor for the Belgian coast as a whole; it has yet to become an obvious choice for British visitors but it has a great mix of attractions, on and off the beach. I didn't try the sand yachting, but might have done for historical research as a Flemish scientist designed a craft as early as the 16th century and the first modern style land yacht was invented at De Panne in 1898. Maybe next time… ■

Dr Kathryn Ferry's latest book is *The Nation's Host: Butlin's and the Story of the British Seaside* (Viking, 2016)

Read more of Kathryn's experiences on the Belgian coast at historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine/Belgium

Next month: Alex Larman pays a visit to Barcelona

Been there...

Have you been to **the Belgian coast?** Do you have a top tip for readers? Contact us via Twitter or Facebook

twitter.com/historyextra

facebook.com/historyextra

ADVICE FOR TRAVELLERS

BEST TIME TO GO

To see the coast at its most vibrant go in the summer. The Sand Sculpture Festival at Ostend and International Cartoon Festival at Knokke-Heist run for the season.

GETTING THERE

Driving is easy – from the Eurotunnel in Calais it is just 40 miles to De Panne. There are train services between the coast and Brussels, which is served by two airports.

WHAT TO PACK

Expect similar temperatures to the UK and a likelihood of sea breezes. The beaches are great for sunbathing, but pack a jumper too.

WHAT TO BRING BACK

Delicious Belgian chocolate and local beer. The markets are a great place to find other delicacies. Ostend holds its market on Monday, Thursday and Saturday mornings.

READERS' VIEWS

I'd recommend a trip to Ostend, if only to visit the great Green Man whiskey bar
@kristonrennie

I can recommend De Haan, simple old-fashioned resort with great beach and lovely public park
Sharon Green

Ostend has a fine beach many restaurants and good shopping
Kay Smith



HERITAGE ADVENTURES

There really is no better time to explore some of the UK's fantastic heritage sites for yourself. With so much to see and so much to do, why not head out and support the UK's heritage and enjoy a great day out?

ROSSLYN CHAPEL, NEAR EDINBURGH



Rosslyn Chapel was founded in 1446. The beauty of its setting and the mysterious symbolism of its ornate stonework have inspired, attracted and intrigued visitors for generations. The visitor centre tells the chapel's story – from its 15th century origins to the Da Vinci Code and beyond. The chapel is seven miles from Edinburgh, with good transport links from the city. Open all year. Guides provide free talks throughout the day.

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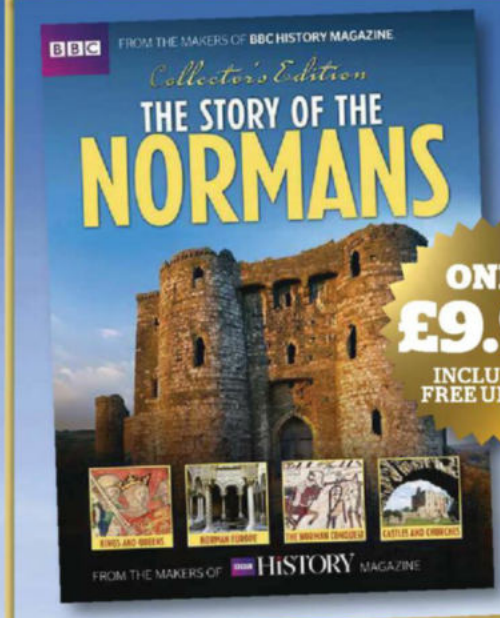
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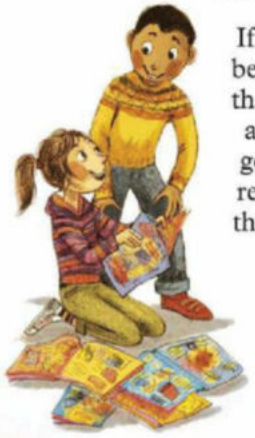
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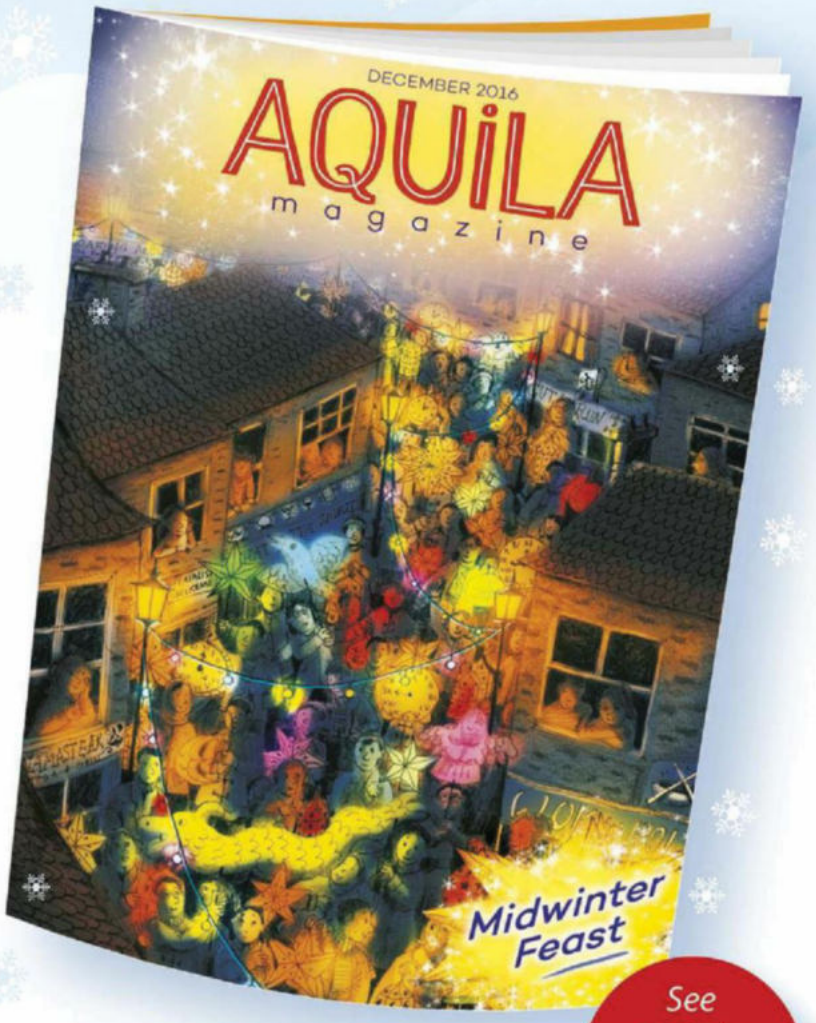
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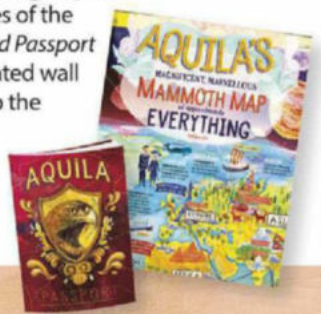
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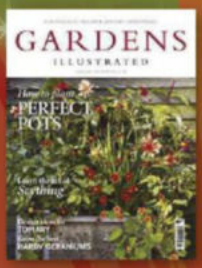
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QUIZ

BY JULIAN HUMPHRYS

Try your hand at this month's history quiz

ONLINE QUIZZES
historyextra.com/bbchistory-magazine/**quiz**

1. What was 'Tradescant's Ark'?



2. Who was England's last Roman Catholic archbishop of Canterbury?

3. What links John Francis, Edward Oxford and Roderick Maclean (left)?

4. Herleva, the mother of William the Conqueror, had two other sons. One was Robert of Mortain. Who was the other?

5. Which controversial soldier is buried at Dryburgh Abbey in the Scottish Borders?

6. a. What is this building, and where?
b. In which century was it largely built?



QUIZ ANSWERS
1. The South Lambeth house of naturalist and traveller John Tradescant and his son (also John), where their collection of 'rarities' was displayed for the public to view. The collection later formed the basis of Oxford's Ashmolean Museum. **2.** Reginald Pole (served 1556–58). **3.** They all attempted to assassinate Queen Victoria. **4.** Odo of Bayeux. **5.** Field Marshal Douglas Haig. **6. a.** Castell Coch, near Cardiff. **b.** The 19th century.

GOT A QUESTION?

Write to *BBC History Magazine*, Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1 3BN.
Email: historymagazine@historyextra.com
or submit via our website: *historyextra.com/bbchistorymagazine*

GETTY IMAGES

Q When and why was the convention introduced for men to take their hats off to ladies and before going into churches?

Peter Hankins, by email

A It's often claimed that the custom of removing or tipping the hat originated in medieval times, when knights would raise visors or remove helmets as a gesture of peaceful intent. As with most matters of etiquette, we know of no real evidence for this, though it's the most popular theory. If you have any proof, please write in and let us know!

That custom was extended, the theory goes, as soldiers and male civilians began to raise or remove headwear as a gesture of respect to superiors or equals. The military salute may have originated as a less troublesome alternative to constant doffing of the hat. (Doff is a now slightly archaic diminution of 'do off', the opposite of donning, as in 'do on'.)

This theory is all very well, but Biblical authority on the matter stretches back much further. Saint Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians enjoined men to worship with bare heads, while women were instructed to cover their heads. So men had been removing headwear in church from the earliest times.

Doffing or tipping one's hat at some point became a mark of respect for ladies, though usually dependent on status. The degree to which fashion-leading French monarch Louis XIV raised or removed his hat to women reflected their rank; he was admired for chivalrously touching his hat to acknowledge even humble women.

In 19th- and early 20th-century Europe and America, when almost all adults wore hats and caps outdoors, the etiquette reached its apogee – and often provided a convenient way of acknowledging an acquaintance without having to stop and chat.

Men were also expected to remove hats while national anthems were played, when a funeral cortege passed, and indoors – a custom purportedly also with medieval origins, since removing your helmet in someone's house meant you weren't about to loot or burn it. In short, it was a mark of respect.

Women were not expected to take off their hats either in salute or indoors – which was particularly convenient in eras when they were held in place by an elaborate arrangement of hatpins.

Eugene Byrne, author and journalist

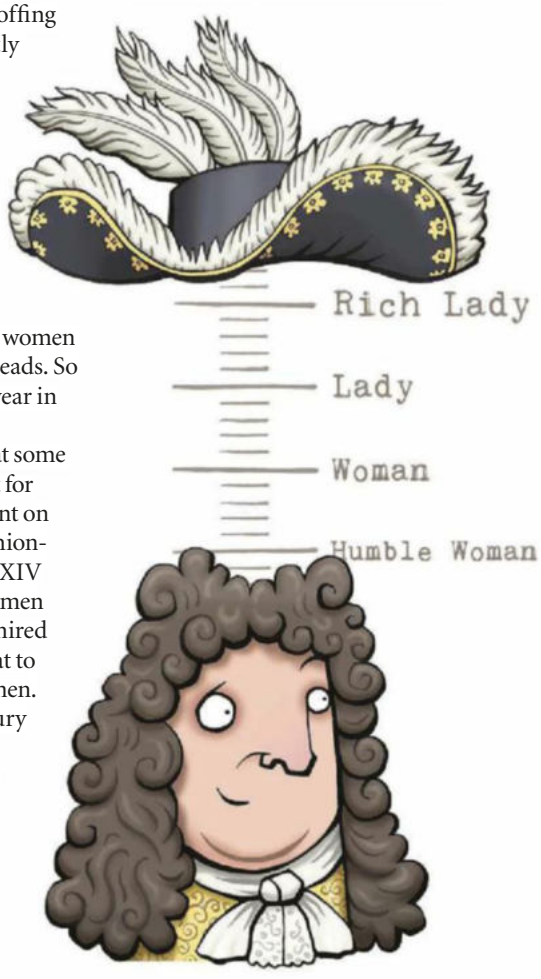


ILLUSTRATION BY GLEN MCBETH

SAMANTHA'S RECIPE CORNER



Every issue, picture editor **Samantha Nott** brings you a recipe from the past. This month it's a medieval treat for warming the spirits on Halloween evening

Soul cakes

In the eighth century Pope Gregory III established a feast to revere the saints on 1 November, which became known as All Saints' (or All Hallows) Day, replacing the pagan Celtic festival of Samhain. The night before – All Hallows' Evening – w ld become Halloween.

Many pagan traditions were adapted to become Christian ones, hence 'guising' – donning fancy dress to tour local houses – became 'souling'. Soul cakes would be given to the poor, who went from house to house singing and praying for the souls of departed loved ones – a precursor to 'trick or treating'.

This recipe, somewhere between a biscuit and scone, will provide a treat for young callers on Halloween!

INGREDIENTS

175g butter
175g caster sugar
3 egg yolks
450g plain flour
2 tsp mixed spice
100g currants
a little milk

METHOD

Pre-heat oven to 190°C (375°F, gas mark 5). Mix together the butter and sugar, then add in the separated egg yolks, one by one.

Sieve the flour and the mixed spice into a separate bowl. Slowly add to the butter, sugar and egg-yolk mixture. Stir in the currants and add just enough milk to make a soft dough.

Roll out the dough and cut out little cakes with a biscuit cutter. Decorate each cake with a cross of currants, then place on a baking sheet.

Bake for 10 to 15 minutes or until golden brown, then leave to cool on a wire rack.

VERDICT

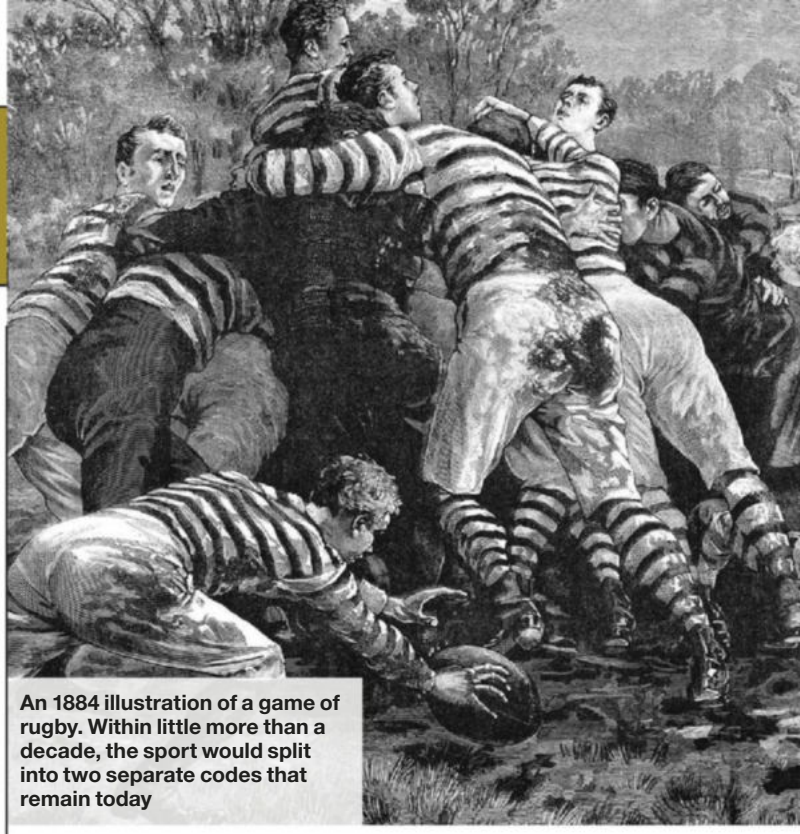
"Plain-looking but surprisingly tasty soul food"

Difficulty: 3/10
Time: 45 minutes

Adapted from a recipe in Cattern Cakes and Lace: A Calendar of Feasts *by Julia Jones and Barbara Deer (Dorling Kindersley, 1987)*



Soul cakes: tasty home-made treats for Halloween



An 1884 illustration of a game of rugby. Within little more than a decade, the sport would split into two separate codes that remain today

ALAMY

Q Why do we have two codes in the sport of rugby and when and where did they split?

Trevor Cowburn, by email

A Rugby's great split happened in 1895 when the top clubs in the north of England left the Rugby Football Union (RFU) to create the Northern Union, which became the Rugby Football League in 1922.

The split's roots lay in the late 1870s when rugby became hugely popular with the working classes in northern English industrial towns. Crowds were often bigger than for soccer and demands grew for players to be paid. But unlike with soccer, the RFU refused to allow professionalism, fearing it would lose control of the game, and in 1886 it declared rugby a purely amateur sport.

In response, northern rugby clubs argued for 'broken-time' payments to working-class players to compensate them for taking time off work to play the sport. Differences about how to play rugby emerged too, with the north of England favouring an open, passing game containing fewer scrums.

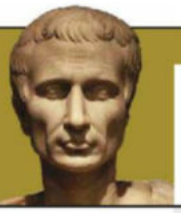
In 1893 the RFU decisively voted down the north's proposal to allow broken-time payments and civil war broke out in rugby. Major clubs Wigan, Huddersfield, Salford and Leigh were suspended. With compromise impossible, 21 clubs met at Huddersfield's George Hotel on 29 August 1895 to found the Northern Union.

The overwhelming majority of northern clubs soon joined this body. Rugby's rules were reformed, teams reduced to 13-a-side, line-outs abolished and scoring amended to make tries more important than goals. In response, the RFU banned for life anyone connected with rugby league.

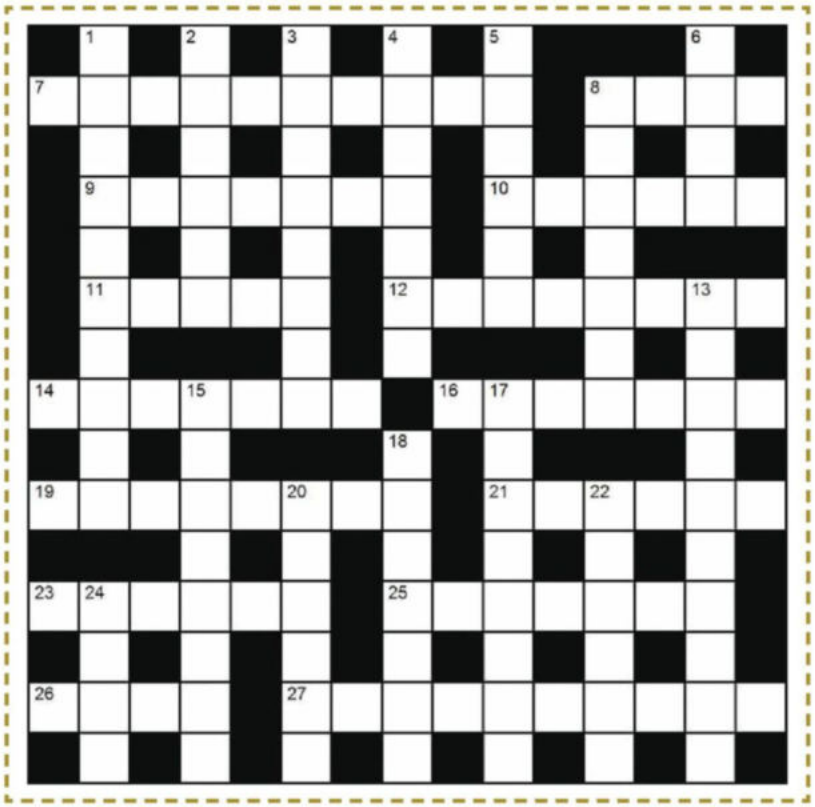
Today, rugby remains two separate sports, each with its own distinct rules, traditions and communities.

Tony Collins is professor of history at De Montfort University and author of *The Oval World: A Global History of Rugby* (Bloomsbury 2015)

PRIZE CROSSWORD



Julius Caesar was assassinated in March – but on what day of the month? *(see 6 down)*



Across

7 The first Danish monarch of the Oldenburg dynasty (9,1)
8 The real surname of 'Buffalo Bill' (4)
9/25 Title applied to Cixi who, in 1861, seized power in China as regent to her young son (7,7)
10 A major philosophy of classical China, requiring adherents to follow 'the way' (6)
11 Albert ___, Hitler's chief architect and war production minister (5)
12 Sir Steven ___, historian acclaimed for his *A History of the Crusades* (8)
14 In the past, the bodies of those committing this former crime might have been buried at a crossroads (7)
16 US Civil War general, celebrated for his 'March to the Sea' from Atlanta to Savannah (7)
19 Island group in the Aegean, home to a Bronze Age culture famous for its white marble idols (8)
21 Area of Venice and name of the city's oldest bridge over the Grand Canal (6)
23 The Black Death, which reached Europe in the mid-14th century, was a particularly devastating one (6)
25 See 9 across.
26 Helmut ___, chancellor of West Germany (1982–90) and then of the reunified Germany (1990–98) (4)
27 American city, founded in 1718, named after a French duke who was regent to Louis XV (3,7)

Down

1 The location of one of England's bloodiest battles, fought in 1403, in which Henry 'Hotspur' Percy died (10)
2 French fortified port, objective of a brave but failed raid by the Allies during the German occupation in 1942 (6)
3 English king whose widow, Emma of Normandy, married his successor, Cnut (8)
4 Colloquial name for the Official Report of parliamentary debates, named after its 18th- to 19th-century father-and-son printers (7)
5 Mary ___, a maid of honour to Queen Elizabeth I, thought to be the 'dark lady', to whom some of Shakespeare's sonnets were addressed (6)
6 The Roman day of the month of March when Julius Caesar was assassinated (4)
8 The traditional pastoral staff of western Christianity (7)
13 British mathematician and computer pioneer, famed for his code-breaking role at Bletchley Park in the Second World War (4,6)
15 The name of this Roman emperor means 'little boot', a nickname given to him by the troops serving under his father Germanicus (8)
17 An 11th-century leader of resistance to the Normans, based at the Isle of Ely (8)
18 Location of the battle at which, on 8 January 871, the young Alfred the Great defeated the Danes (7)
20 A Spanish governess or chaperone – Catherine of Aragon's ___, Elvira Manuel, was involved in the controversy surrounding the consummation (or otherwise) of the marriage of Prince Arthur and Catherine (6)
22 Germanic invaders of post-Roman Britain (6)
24 This First World War battle in September and October 1915 saw the first use of poison gas by the Allies (4)

Compiled by **Eddie James**

ALAMY

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Across: 7 Hoover 8 Thracian 11 Thermopylae 12 KGB 13 Leningrad 14 India 16 Acadia 18 Saigon 21 Lasso 22 Schindler 24 Edo 26 Hippocrates 27 Blind eye 28 Harald
Down: 1 Whittle 2 Copernicus 3 Yeoman 4 Khalid 5 James III 6 Silk 9 Nubian 10 Sparta 15 Diocletian 17 Drogheda 18 School 19 Allenby 20 Crusade 22 Sepoys 23 Norman 25 Ovid

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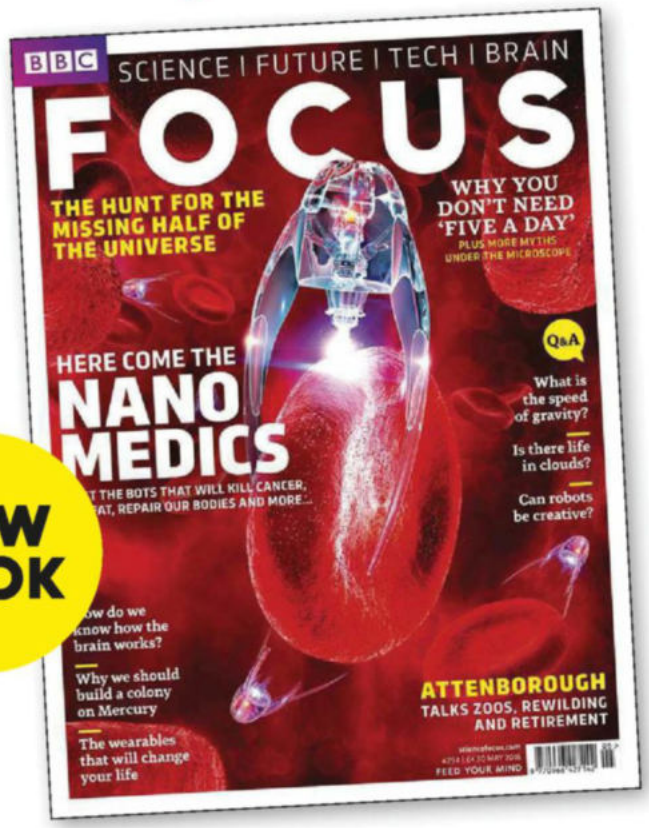
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Emma Hamilton

Quintin Colville explores the complex character of Nelson's mistress

Gold rush

Felicity Aston describes the frenzy that followed the discovery of gold in Canada's Yukon territory in 1896



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"She didn't twiddle her thumbs. She got on with things – and she paved the way for other female writers. Her novels have a feminist twist, and she had a strong sense that life wasn't fair for women"

Writer Jacqueline Wilson chooses

Charlotte Brontë

1816–55



Charlotte Brontë, painted by JH Thompson in the 1850s. "She was very self-conscious about her looks, yet very self-assured about her writing," says Jacqueline Wilson

Charlotte Brontë, born in the West Riding of Yorkshire, was the eldest of the three Brontë sisters who survived into adulthood. A novelist and poet, she is best known for *Jane Eyre*, which she originally published under the pen-name Currer Bell. In 1854 she married her father's curate, Arthur Bell Nicholls, and soon became pregnant but fell ill and died, along with her unborn child, aged just 38.

When did you first hear about Charlotte Brontë?
I had a vague awareness of the Brontë sisters when I was a girl, and read *Jane Eyre* at school when I was 13. I was fascinated by the novel and began reading biographies of the three sisters – and with so many of them out there, I'll probably be doing so forever.

What kind of person was Charlotte?
On the one hand, she was shy and timid and very self-conscious about her looks – she clearly didn't like the way she looked. Yet she was very self-assured when it came to her writing and the worth of her writing. And she was the Brontë sister who encouraged Emily and Anne to collect up their poems. She was the one who pushed to get them published, and she was the one brave enough to face literary London and go to terrifying dinners with Thackeray!

What made Charlotte a hero?
She's always been my literary heroine – for me, the greatest Brontë. Yes, she's best known for *Jane Eyre*, but she took people by surprise with her book *Shirley*, written under difficult circumstances [three of her siblings died at this time]. She also carried on writing when she was alone in the parsonage with her stern father. When a curate proposed, she was brave enough to stand up to her father [who opposed the marriage] and accept – a bid for marital bliss despite the fact that by then she was in her late 30s. She didn't twiddle her thumbs. She got on with things and paved the way for other female writers. Her novels have a feminist twist; she had a strong sense that life wasn't fair for women, particularly impoverished women.

What was Charlotte's finest hour?
Nearly every woman I know who likes reading ranks *Jane Eyre* as one of their top 10 books, as do I. Though Rochester is not a conventional hero, I find him vastly more appealing than Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

Jane Eyre has an extraordinary effect on people. Women of all types identify with Jane and are stirred by the story, a curious mix of ultra-realism combined with this strange Gothic romance. It's the first book I know of that starts off in the first person as if written by a child – and such a realistic and extraordinary child. Jane is poor, she's plain, she's put upon – yet she remains fiercely independent and thinks for herself. She's not cowed in the slightest. *Jane Eyre* is a book that ticks every box.

Wasn't Charlotte something of a one-hit wonder?
In my view, Charlotte's last book, *Villette*, was another masterpiece, even if its protagonist, Lucy, is a slightly more irritating character than Jane. It's a mature work, though not quite up there with *Jane Eyre*. I think people should read all of Charlotte's books.

Is there anything you don't particularly admire about her?
She certainly doesn't sympathise with children. Most of the children in her books are a bit curt or outrageously naughty or unkind. But I think this is understandable because she was built like a child herself and found it difficult as a governess to keep control. One of her charges apparently even threw a bible at her.

Can you see any parallels between her life and your own?
I identified with Charlotte because I was quite small, wasn't pretty and was poor for a long time. But she was a great writer and I'm trying to be a quite good writer.

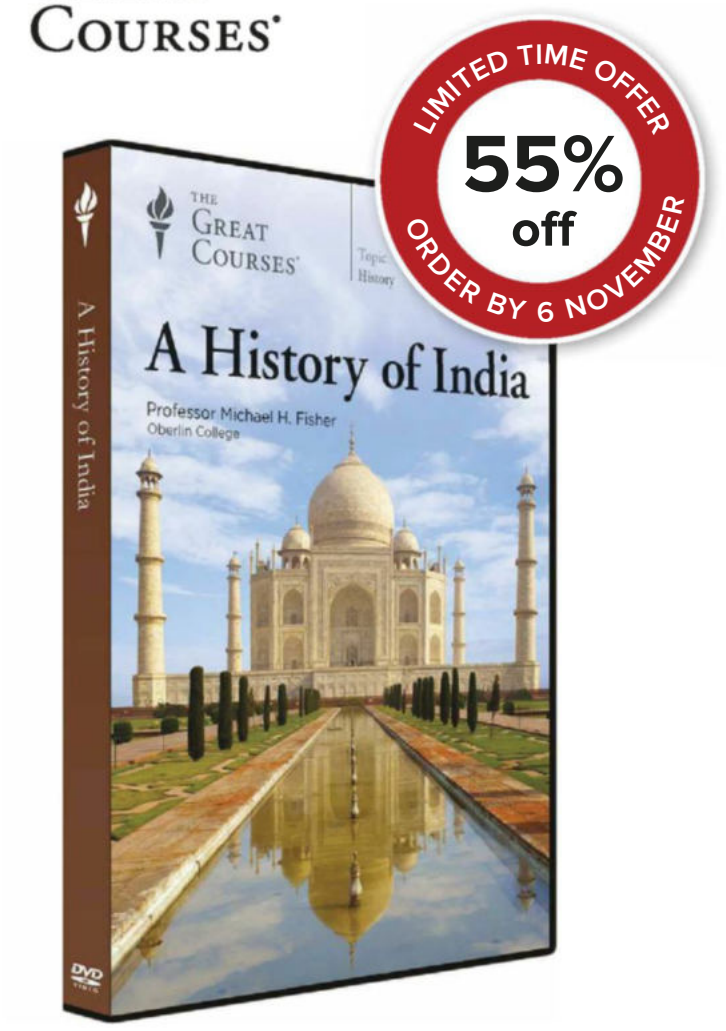
If you could meet Charlotte, what would you ask her?
I'd love to ask her about the books that she and her siblings wrote when they were small children, and to generally find out more about her childhood. H

Jacqueline Wilson was talking to York Membery

Jacqueline Wilson is one of the UK's most popular children's authors. Her new book, *Clover Moon* (Doubleday), will be published on 6 October. Her tales about a troubled girl living in a residential care home were dramatised in the CBBC series *The Story of Tracy Beaker*

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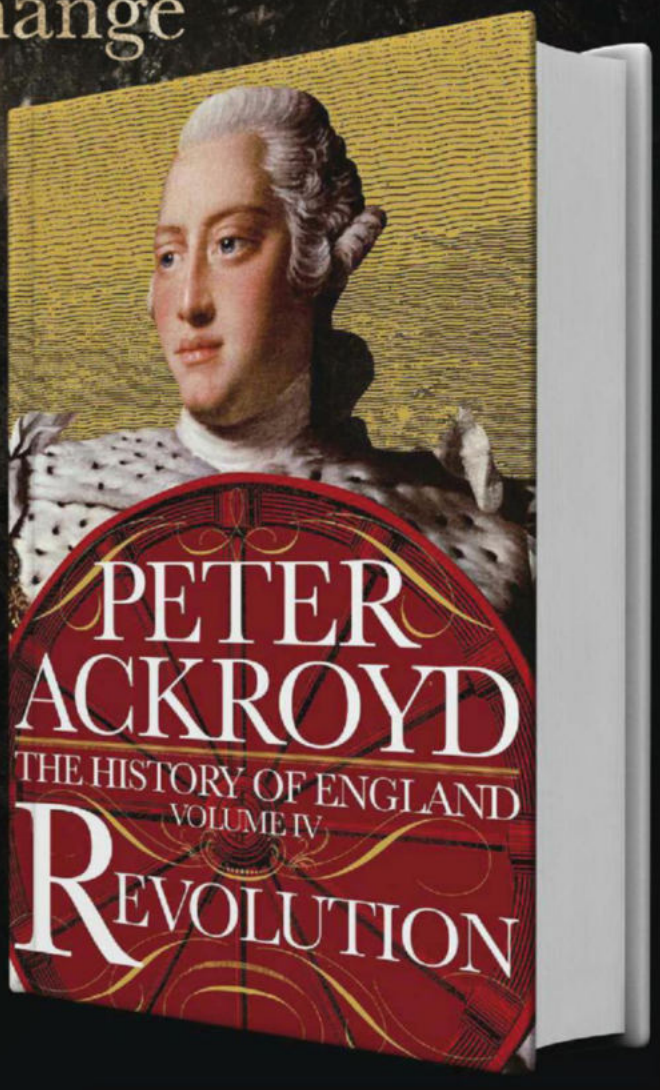
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